

The Arkham Sampler

AUTUMN, 1948

THE SIGN
by LORD DUNSANY

CHANGE OF HEART
by ROBERT BLOCH

NUT BUSH FARM
by MRS. J. H. RIDDELL

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THE SIGN

by LORD DUNSANY

One day as I entered the Billiards Club about lunch-time, I noticed at once that the conversation was a good bit deeper than usual. In fact they were all discussing transmigration. They were men of many topics, varying from the price of more than one commodity on the Stock Exchange to the best place to buy oysters, yet the intricacies of the after-life of a Brahmin were a little outside their range. A glance at Jorkens showed me what it was all about; if they had gone out of their own depth, it was as much as anything to get out of Jorkens', just as anyone taking air on an esplanade might walk out to sea to avoid an acquaintance with too long a story to tell. The reason for wishing to get out of Jorkens' depth was naturally that one or two of the others had tales of their own to tell.

"Transmigration," said Jorkens. "It's a thing one hears lots of talk of and seldom sees."

Terbut opened his mouth and said nothing.

"It happened to come my way once," went on Jorkens.

"To come your way?" said Terbut.

"I'll tell you," said Jorkens. "When I was quite young I knew a man called Horcher, who impressed me a great deal. One of the things for instance that used to impress me about him was the way in which, if one were talking of politics and wondering what was going to happen, he would quietly say what the Government were going to do, when there hadn't been a word about it in any paper: that was always impressive; and still more so if one was guessing what was going to happen in Europe; he would come in then with his information in just the same quiet way."

"And was he right?" asked Terbut.

"Well," replied Jorkens, "I won't say that. But it isn't everyone who would venture to prophesy at all. And any way he impressed me a great deal by it at the time, and older men than me. And another thing he was very good at; he would give me advice on any conceivable subject. I'm not saying the advice was good, but it showed the vast range of his interests and his

gladness to share them with others, that to hear of anything that you wished to do was enough to call forth his immediate advice about it. I lost a good deal of money, one way and another, on bits of advice of his; and yet there was a spontaneity about it, and a certain apparent depth, that could not fail to impress you. Well, one of those days, being very young and all the world equally new to me, and the faith of the Brahmins no stranger to me than the theory of man's descent, I started talking to Horcher on the subject of transmigration. He smiled at my ignorance, as he always did, in a friendly sort of way, and then told me all about it. The Brahmins, he said were wrong in a great many particulars, not having studied the question scientifically or being intellectually qualified to understand its more difficult aspects. I will not tell you the theory of transmigration as he explained it to me, because you can read it yourselves in text-books; it's not what he told me that was new, so much as the quiet certainty with which he told it, and the rather exciting impression he left on my mind that he had discovered it all for himself. But two things I will tell you about it; and one was that, on account of the interest he had always taken in conditions that affected the welfare of the lower classes he would, 'if (as he put it) there was any justice hereafter,' be rewarded by a considerable promotion in his next existence. 'For if,' he said, 'there were to be no reward in a subsequent state for an interest in such things during this one, there would be no sense in it.' I remember we walked in a garden as he told me all this, and the path was full of snails, which were probably all moving towards some poplars a little way off, for every tree had several of them climbing up the trunks, as though they all made their journey at that time of the year, which was early October. I remember him stepping on the snails as he walked, not from any cruelty, for he was not cruel, but because it could not matter to forms of life that were so absurdly low. And the other thing that he told me was that he had invented a signal or rather that he had invented a way of branding it into his memory. The signal was no more than the Greek letter Phi, but he was a man of enormous industry and he had trained or hypnotized himself into remembering this one sign with such vehemence that he was convinced he would make it automatically, even in another existence. In this life he frequently made it quite unconsciously, tracing it on a wall with his finger, or even in the air: he had

trained himself to do that. And he told me that if ever he saw me in his next life, and remembered me (and he smiled pleasantly as though he thought that such a remembrance was possible) he would make that sign to me, whatever our respective stations might be."

"And what did he think he was going to be?" I asked Jorkens.

"He never would tell me that," Jorkens replied. "But I knew he was sure that it was to be something of the most tremendous importance, I knew that from the condescension that showed through the kindness of his manner when he said he would make the sign to me; and then there was a certain slow grace with which he lifted his hand, when he made the sign in the air, which more than suggested someone seated upon a throne. I don't think he would have wanted to be bothered with me at all in that triumphant second life of his, but for his pride in having stamped that sign by sheer industry into his very soul, so that he could not help making it now, and felt confident that habit would endure wherever his soul went, and he naturally wanted posterity to know what he had achieved. Every half hour or so he would quite unconsciously make the sign as we walked; he had certainly trained himself to do that."

"And had he any justification for thinking he would sit on a throne," I asked, "if he had a second life?"

"Well," said Jorkens, "he was a very busy man, and it isn't for me to say to what extent his interest in other men's lives was philanthropy or interference: I took him at his own valuation then, so I don't like to value him otherwise now he's dead. His own view was that pretty well all men were fools, so that somebody must look after them, and that at much personal inconvenience he was prepared to do so himself, and that any system that did not reward a man who was so philanthropic as that must be a silly system. Mind you I don't think he did think that Creation was silly, because he believed that he *was* going to be rewarded: the most I've heard him say against it was that he could have arranged many things much better than they are arranged if he had had the ordering of the world, and he gave me a few instances.

"Well, he impressed on me this sign, which he said would prove transmigration to be of the utmost value to science; though I think that what may have interested him more was that I should see to what heights he had deservedly risen. And, mind you,

he had got me to believe him. I thought over it a lot, and often I pictured myself in my later years attending a levee or other great function at the Court of some foreign country, and suddenly receiving from the sovereign, I alone of all that assembly, that signal of recognition that would mean nothing to all the rest.

"He died at a good age, and I was still under thirty; and I decided to do what he had advised me, and to watch in my old age the careers of men holding high places in Europe (for he didn't think much of Asia), born after his death and showing certain abilities which might be expected from himself in another life, with all the advantages of his experience in this one. For I said to myself 'if he's right about transmigration, he'll be right about what it can do for him.' And, do you know, he *was* right about transmigration. I was walking in that very garden the year after he died, thinking of the Greek letter Phi; as he had told me always to think of it, the distinct circle and the upright bar through the midst of it. Often I would make the sign with my fingers, as he used to do, to keep it in my mind; I made it that day on the old red garden-wall. I watched a snail on the wall making its slow journey, and remembered his contempt for them, and was somehow glad to think that he had not despised the poor things more than he seemed to despise men. The glittering track it was making up the wall, and which gathered the sunlight to it, was to him not worth noticing, but then much of the work of men was to him equally foolish. I looked still at the bright track of the snail's progress, until I realized that he would have said that only a fool or a poet would waste his time with such trifles, and then I turned away. As I turned away I saw by one of those glances that stray from the corners of our eyes that the snail was making a very distinct curve. I looked again, and set little store by what I had seen, for chance could have done that much, but the snail had made a very distinct quarter of a circle on his way up the wall. It was so neat a bit of a circle that I went on watching, till it was as good a semi-circle as it had been a quarter of a circle. It was not till it began to turn downwards that I grew excited. And then I did grow very excited indeed; for the snail had been obviously climbing the wall. What did it want to turn downwards for? The diameter of the circle was about four inches. On and on went the snail. With my mind so full of the sign I could not possibly ignore that, if the snail went on and completed the circle, it would be half

the sign. And it was just the size, too, of the sign that Horcher used to make in that regal way with his fore-finger. And the snail went on. When only half an inch remained to complete the circle, it may sound silly, but I made the sign myself, in the air with my finger. I knew the snail couldn't see it: if it really was Horcher, I knew it could only be the habit, self-hypnotized into the very ego, that was making that sign, and nothing to do with any intellect. Then I put the absurd idea clean out of my mind. Yet the snail went on. And then it completed the circle. 'Well,' I said, 'the snail has moved in a circle: lots of animals do: dogs do often: I expect birds do too: why shouldn't they? And I must keep steady.'

"Do you know that snail, as soon as it finished its round, went straight on up the wall, divided that circle into two halves as neatly as you ever saw anything divided. I stood and stared with my mouth and eyes wide open. Below ran the perfectly vertical track by which the snail climbed the wall, then the circle, and now the continuation of the vertical line dividing the circle in two. It came to the top of the circle. What now? The snail went straight on upwards. It came to a point a couple of inches above the top of the circle and there it stopped, having made a perfect Phi, having proved the dream of the Brahmin to be a reality. 'Poor old Horcher,' I said."

"Did you do anything for the snail?" asked Terbut.

"I thought for a moment of killing it," said Jorkens, "to give Horcher a better chance with his third life. And then I realized that there was something about his outlook that it might take hundreds of lives to purify. You can't go on and on killing snails, you know."

PROVIDENCE:
TWO GENTLEMEN MEET AT MIDNIGHT
by AUGUST DERLETH

- H. P. L.: Good evening, sir. We meet at last
along these streets both you and I have often passed.
- E. A. P.: Indeed, we are not strangers, you and I,
for all the many times you passed me by
while you were still on that material plane
and pervious to cold and wind and rain.
I used to see you when you walked
past Helen's home, and one evening when you talked
till almost dawn with friends upon the stones
that mark more than a century of bones,
and wrote some verses with genteel comedy and some
ado—
an acrostic, if I recall, a poem or two,
of which, sir—my respects—yours was quite the best.
Of your nocturnal wanderings, that evening marked a
crest.
- H. P. L.: Yes, I remember it—we celebrated one
who went before, who seemed of night rather than the
sun.
- E. A. P.: It is quite true that I
preferred the night owl's cry
to day's round. But this leaning toward the midnight
air,
my friend, methinks we share.
- H. P. L.: The night, sir, does for Providence and all things old
something that takes from them the chilling cold
of newness and the marks of what some poor, benighted
men
incline to calling progress. Then,
too, there was for me the knowledge in this place
you would not choose a sunlit hour to show your face.
- E. A. P.: True, there are some places that I would not go—
and they grow more in number; one year it is Brick Row
torn down, and on another a house I knew,
but there remain to such as us a few,

as always—Helen's home, and others on old Prospect Street,
Benefit and College Hill—these byways knew my feet long ago, as once I knew familiar walls and floors long since away. You, too, pause at once known doors; There was a house on Angell Street you sought in vain one night, and on Barnes, at number ten, and again on College, number sixty-six—
old things, old places—nothing sticks to us like these. I followed you another time; you went along the Seekonk where,
a child, you made obeisance to ancient gods of earth and air.
My friend, you see,
we share a common loyalty.

- H. P. L.: How long ago that was! Since then, you knew, others took their place—Dagon, Yog-Sothoth, Cthulhu.
- E. A. P.: A host of evil, as much the terrors of the mind as were those older, my own kind.
- H. P. L.: All that is done, sir. But here all 'round still stands for us a kind of hallowed ground—hallowed in a way for each his own, and neither of us in this is quite alone.
- E. A. P.: The night is young, my friend,
and there are old, enchanting paths to wend.
A walk down Benefit, past Helen's home, past that shunned house of old alarm
once you celebrated Let us forego formality.
Come, sir, my arm!

A NOTE ON AUBREY BEARDSLEY

by MALCOLM FERGUSON



Epochal indeed in the progression of fantasy writing is the Keynote Series published by John Lane of London between 1893 and 1897. This series included such still highly-readable titles as M. P. Shiel's first book, *Prince Zaleski*, as well as his third, *Shapes in the Fire*; Arthur Machen's *The Great God Pan* and *The Three Imposters*; and Fiona Macleod's *The Mountain Lovers*. Thus was fantasy represented among the thirty-three titles. Thus, in addition to the contribution of decorative designs by Aubrey Beardsley.

To the company of such writers as Shiel, Machen, and Macleod, as well as William James, Oscar Wilde, Max Beerbohm, James Abbott McNeill Whistler, and Anatole France, whom John Lane numbered among his friends, he introduced the barely twenty-year-old artist, Aubrey Vincent Beardsley. The young man was at home among them until his death, at the age of twenty-six, of tuberculosis.

In this brief time, however, he influenced the graphic arts deeply, and demonstrated a brilliance of imaginative perception of the highest order. He drew from a wide knowledge of art, of music, of literature—classical, English and French particularly, to give originality and insight, sometimes diabolical or grotesque, to the graphic portrayal of a staggeringly wide range of subjects. He is best known today for his illustrations of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* and Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, in each of which the authors were caricatured, and for his drawings in John Lane's quarterly, *The Yellow Book*, and in *The Savoy*.

Less familiar, but of no little interest, are his illustrations for a series of three little volumes of witticisms gathered under the title *Bon Mots*. The two vignettes here reproduced are drawn

from large-sized proofs for these volumes. The German pen-draughtsman, Henrich Kley, did similar work, both as to imaginative concept and deft execution, but such able grotesques are indeed rare.

Not only for itself is the grotesque and arabesque art of Beardsley of fantasy-interest today, for it has also influenced writers in this genre. Nor is this unprecedented; Lafcadio Hearn and H. P. Lovecraft both expressed indebtedness to Gustav Dore, whose gloomy, shadowed castles and sinister old city streets, sometimes terribly denizenized, add to the *frisson d'horreur* of many a tale. Goya, Hogarth, Boecklin, Cruikshank and possibly others come to mind as similarly



influential. Beardsley seems to have influenced two writers, D. K. Broster, of *Couching at the Door* fame, and Gustav Meyer-Meyrink, whose story, *The Man on the Bottle*, was admittedly drawn from Beardsley's manner, quite possibly from *The Scarlet Pastorage*, reproduced here.

Though there have long been artists for stories of Pierrot, Harlequin, and others, Beardsley supplies a fantastic element apparently from his own mind which gives this series an alien and hauntingly elusive aspect. In this *commedia dell'arte* vein, "the weft or reality (is woven) with warp of simulation," as Krehbiel says of the opera, *I Pagliacci*. For nowhere does the actor become the protagonist so much as in this formalized rather than rote-memorized form of drama. Pablo Picasso's *The Man with a Blue Guitar*, as the subject for a metaphysical poem by the contemporary American poet, Wallace Stevens, all bear upon this same relationship which Beardsley and before him, Tiepolo, have engrossed themselves. As for *The Scarlet Pastorage*, it is as fascinating as the tableau in a dream—at once meaningless and meaningful.

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Beardsley has done some illustrations for Poe, as well. For other information about him, there is a bibliography and line drawings by E. A. Gallatin, published by the G. K. O'Connell Society, and there is a Modern Library title, long out of print but not excessively rare, entitled, *The Art of Aubrey Beardsley*.

ONLY TO ONE RETURNED

by CLARK ASHTON SMITH

Often, before the mortal mouth has known
What fruit the vagrant phoenixes devour
In Melusina's or Armida's bower,
Not fully savored are the apples grown
In charmless orchards closed about with stone:
Only to one returned, in some late hour,
From shores of lotè where guardian scyllas glower,
The sweetness of the fruits of Earth is shown.

Thus, turning from translunar seasons bleak,
Or borderlands of Endor, ill to seek,
Where necromancy's wandering wisps grow dim
And Lilith and her night-bound daughters dwell,
Love finds again some fleshly citadel,
Safe-walled, with many a pleasance sweet to him.

* * * *

A SPELL USEFUL NEAR WATER

by PETER VIERECK

Big black demon in the sea,
Who believes in you but me?
Who else feeds you, big fat fish?
If you're hungry, grant my wish.

Big black demon in the sea,
Certain folks are mean to me.
I can feed you more than they.
Kill them slowly, day by day.

Every time they groan with pain,
In I'll throw a fish again.
Who but you knows whom I hate?
Certain folks will know too late.

Low and soft, I'll speak this spell;
Loud, I'll ask: "Not feeling well?"
Every time they groan with pain,
I'll throw you fish, fish, fish again.

NUT BUSH FARM

by MRS. J. H. RIDDELL

I

When I entered upon the tenancy of Nut Bush Farm almost the first piece of news which met me, in the shape of a whispered rumour, was that "something" had been seen in the "long field."

Pressed closely as to what he meant, my informant reluctantly stated that the "something" took the "form of a man," and that the wood and the path leading thereto from Whittleby were supposed to be haunted.

Now, all this annoyed me exceedingly. I do not know when I was more put out than by this intelligence. It is unnecessary to say I did not believe in ghosts or anything of that kind, but my wife being a very nervous, impressionable woman, and our only child a delicate weakling, in the habit of crying himself into fits if left alone at night without a candle, I really felt at my wit's end to imagine what I should do if a story of this sort reached their ears.

And reach them I knew it must if they came to Nut Bush Farm, so the first thing I did when I heard people did not care to venture down the Beech Walk or through the copse, or across the long field after dark, or indeed by day, was to write to say I thought they had both better remain on at my father-in-law's till I could get the house thoroughly to rights.

After that I lit my pipe and went out for a stroll; when I knocked the ashes out of my pipe and re-entered the sitting-room I had made up my mind. I could not afford to be frightened away from my tenancy. For weal or for woe I must stick to Nut Bush Farm.

It was quite by chance I happened to know anything of the place at first. When I met with that accident in my employers' service, which they rated far too highly and recompensed with a liberality I never can feel sufficiently grateful for, the doctors told me plainly if I could not give up office work and leave London altogether, they would not give a year's purchase for my life.

Life seemed very sweet to me then—it always has done—but just at that period I felt that pleasant hopes of convalescence,

and with that thousand pounds safely banked, I *could* not let it slip away from me.

"Take a farm," advised my father-in-law. "Though people say a farmer's is a bad trade, I know many a man who is making money out of it. Take a farm, and if you want a helping hand to enable you to stand the racket for a year or two, why, you know I am always ready."

I had been bred and born on a farm. My father held something like fifteen hundred acres under the principal landowner in his county, and though it so happened I could not content myself at home, but must needs come up to London to see the lions and seek my fortune, still I had never forgotten the meadows and the cornfields, and the cattle, and the orchards, and the woods and the streams, amongst which my happy boyhood had been spent. Yes, I thought I should like a farm—one not too far from London; and "not too big," advised my wife's father.

"The error people make nowadays," he went on, "is spreading their butter over too large a surface. It is the same in business as in land—they stretch their arms out too far—they will try to wade in deep waters—and the consequence is they never know a day's peace, and end mostly in the bankruptcy court."

He spoke as one having authority, and I knew what he said was quite right. He had made his money by a very different course of procedure, and I felt I could not follow a better example.

I knew something about farming, though not very much. Still agriculture is like arithmetic: when once one knows the multiplication table the rest is not so difficult. I had learned unconsciously the alphabet of soils and crops and stock when I was an idle young dog, and liked nothing better than talking to the labourers, and accompanying the woodman when he went out felling trees; and so I did not feel much afraid of what the result would be, more especially as I had a good business head on my shoulders, and enough money to "stand the racket," as my father-in-law put it, till the land began to bring in her increase.

When I got strong and well again after my long illness—I mean strong and well enough to go about—I went down to look at a farm which was advertised as to let in Kent.

According to the statement in the newspaper, there was no charm that farm lacked; when I saw it I discovered the place

did not possess one virtue, unless, indeed, an old Tudor house fast falling to ruin, which would have proved invaluable to an artist, could be so considered. Far from a railway, having no advantages of water carriage, remote from a market, apparently destitute of society. Nor could these drawbacks be accounted the worst against it. The land, poor originally, seemed to have been totally exhausted. There were fields on which I do not think a goose could have found subsistence—nothing grew luxuriantly save weeds; it would have taken all my capital to get the ground clean. Then I saw the fences were dilapidated, the hedges in a deplorable condition, and the farm buildings in such a state of decay I would not have stabled a donkey in one of them.

Clearly, the King's Manor, which was the modest name of the place, would not do at any price, and yet I felt sorry, for the country around was beautiful, and already the sweet, pure air seemed to have braced up my nerves and given me fresh energy. Talking to mine host at the "Bunch of Hops," in Whittleby, he advised me to look over the local papers before returning to London.

"There be a many farms vacant," he said, "mayhap you'll light on one to suit."

To cut a long story short, I did look in the local paper and found many farms to let, but not one to suit. There was a drawback to each—a drawback at least so far as I was concerned. I felt determined I would not take a large farm. My conviction was then what my conviction still remains, that it is better to cultivate fifty acres thoroughly than to crop, stock, clean, and manure a hundred insufficiently. Besides, I did not want to spend my strength on wages, or take a place so large I could not oversee the workmen on foot. For all these reasons and many more I came reluctantly to the conclusion that there was nothing in that part of the country to suit a poor unspeculative plodder like myself.

It was a lovely afternoon in May when I turned my face towards Whittleby, as I thought, for the the last time. In the morning I had taken train for a farm some ten miles distant and worked my way back on foot to a "small cottage with land" a local agent thought might suit me. But neither the big place nor the little answered my requirements much to the disgust of the auctioneer, who had himself accompanied us to the cottage

under the impression I would immediately purchase it and so secure his commission.

Somewhat sulkily he told me a short cut back to Whittleby, and added, as a sort of rider to all previous statements, the remark:

"You had best look out for what you want in Middlesex. You'll find nothing of that sort hereabouts."

As to the last part of the foregoing sentence I was quite of his opinion, but I felt so oppressed with the result of all my wanderings that I thought upon the whole I had better abandon my search altogether, or else pursue it in some county very far away indeed—perhaps in the land of dreams for that matter!

As has been said, it was a lovely afternoon in May—the hedges were snowy with hawthorn blossom, the chestnuts were bursting into flower, the birds were singing fit to split their little throats, the lambs were dotting the hillsides, and I—ah, well, I was a boy again, able to relish all the rich banquet God spreads out day by day for the delight and nourishment of His too often thankless children.

When I came to a point half way up some rising ground where four lanes met and then wound off each on some picturesque diverse way, I paused to look around regretfully.

As I did so—some distance below me—along what appeared to be a never-before-traversed lane, I saw the gleam of white letters on a black board.

"Come," I thought, "I'll see what this is at all events," and bent my steps towards the place, which might, for all I knew about it, have been a ducal mansion or a cockney's country villa.

The board appeared modestly conspicuous in the foreground of a young fir plantation, and simply bore this legend:

To be let, House and Land
Apply at the "White Dragon."

"It is a mansion," I thought, and I walked on slowly, disappointed.

All of a sudden the road turned a sharp corner and I came in an instant upon the prettiest place I had ever seen or ever desire to see.

I looked at it over a low laurel hedge growing inside an open paling about four feet high. Beyond the hedge there was a strip of turf, green as emeralds, smooth as a bowling green—then came a sunk fence, the most picturesque sort of protection in ingenuity of man ever devised; beyond that, a close-cut lawn

which sloped down to the sunk fence from a house with projecting gables in the front, the recessed portion of the building having three windows on the first floor. Both gables were covered with creepers, the lawn was girt in by a semi-circular sweep of forest trees, the afternoon sun streamed over the grass and tinted the swaying foliage with a thousand tender lights. Hawthorn bushes pink and white, mingled with their taller and grander brothers. The chestnuts here were in flower, the copper beech made a delightful contrast of colour, and a birch rose delicate and graceful close beside.

It was like a fairy scene. I passed my hand across my eyes to assure myself it was all real. Then I thought "if this place be even nearly within my means I will settle here. My wife will grow stronger in this paradise—my boy get more like other lads. Such things as nerves must be unknown where there is not a sight or sound to excite them. Nothing but health, purity, and peace."

Thus thinking, I tore myself away in search of the "White Dragon," the landlord of which small public-house sent a lad to show me over the farm.

"As for the rent," he said, "you will have to speak to Miss Gostock herself—she lives at Chalmont, on the road between here and Whittleby."

In every respect the place suited me; it was large enough, but not too large; had been well farmed, and was amply supplied with water—a stream indeed flowing through it; a station was shortly to be opened, at about half-a-mile's distance; and most of the produce could be disposed of to dealers and tradesmen at Crayshill, a town to which the communication by rail was direct.

I felt so anxious about the matter, it was quite a disappointment to find Miss Gostock from home. Judging from the look of her house, I did not suppose she could afford to stick out for a long rent, or to let a farm lie idle for any considerable period. The servant who appeared in answer to my summons was a singularly red armed and rough handed Phyllis. There was only a strip of carpeting laid down in the hall, the windows were bare of draperies, and the avenue gate, set a little back from the main road, was such as I should have felt ashamed to put in a farmyard.

Next morning I betook myself to Chalmont, anxiously wondering as I walked along what the result of my interview would prove.

When I neared the gate, to which uncomplimentary reference has already been made, I saw standing on the other side a figure wearing a man's broad-brimmed straw hat, a man's coat, and a woman's skirt.

I raised my hat in deference to the supposed sex of this stranger. She put up one finger to the brim of hers, and said, "Servant, sir."

Not knowing exactly what to do, I laid my hand upon the latch of the gate and raised it, but she did not alter her position in the least.

She only asked, "What do you want?"

"I want to see Miss Gostock," was my answer.

"I am Miss Gostock," she said; "what is your business with me?"

I replied meekly that I had come to ask the rent of Nut Bush Farm.

"Have you viewed it?" she inquired.

"Yes." I told her I had been over the place on the previous afternoon.

"And have you a mind to take it?" she persisted. "For I am not going to trouble myself answering a lot of idle inquiries."

So far from my being an idle inquirer, I assured the lady that if we could come to terms about the rent, I should be very glad indeed to take the farm. I said I had been searching the neighbourhood within a circuit of ten miles for some time unsuccessfully, and added, somewhat unguardedly, I suppose, Nut Bush Farm was the only place I had met with which at all met my views.

Standing in an easy attitude, with one arm resting on the top bar of the gate and one foot crossed over the other, Miss Gostock surveyed me, who had unconsciously taken up a similar position, with an amused smile.

"You must think me a very honest person, young man," she remarked.

I answered that I hoped she was, but I had not thought at all about the matter.

"Or else," proceeded this extraordinary lady, "you fancy I am a much greater flat than I am."

"On the contrary," was my reply. "If there be one impression stronger than another which our short interview has made upon me it is that you are a wonderfully direct and capable woman of business."

She looked at me steadily, and then closed one eye, which performance, done under the canopy of the broad-brimmed straw hat, had the most ludicrous effect imaginable.

"You won't catch me napping," she observed, "but however, as you seem to mean dealing, come in; I can tell you my terms in two minutes," and opening the gate—a trouble she would not allow me to take off her hands—she gave me admission.

Then Miss Gostock took off her hat, and swinging it to and fro began slowly walking up the ascent leading to Chalmont, I beside her.

"I have quite made up my mind," she said, "not to let the farm again without a premium; my last tenant treated me abominally—"

I intimated I was sorry to hear that, and waited for further information.

"He had the place at a low rent—a very low rent. He should not have got it so cheap but for his covenanting to put so much money in the soil; and well—I'm bound to say he acted fair so far as that—he fulfilled that part of his contract. Nearly two years ago we had a bit of a quarrel about—well, it's no matter what we fell out over—only the upshot of the affair was he gave me due notice to leave at last winter quarter. At that time he owed about a year-and-a-half's rent—for he was a man who never could bear parting with money—and like a fool I did not push him for it. What trick do you suppose he served me for my pains?"

It was simply impossible for me to guess, so I did not try.

"On the twentieth of December," went on Miss Gostock, turning her broad face and curly grey hair—who wore her hair short like a man—towards me, "he went over to Whittleby, drew five thousand pounds out of the bank, was afterwards met going towards home by a gentleman named Waite, a friend of his. Since then he has never been seen nor heard of."

"Bless my soul!" I exclaimed involuntarily.

"You may be very sure I did not bless his soul," she snarled out angrily. "The man bolted with the five thousand pounds, having previously sold off all his stock and the bulk of his produce, and when I distrained for my rent, which I did pretty smart, I can tell you, there was scarce enough on the premises to pay the levy."

"But what in the world made him bolt?" I asked, quite unconsciously adopting Miss Gostock's expressive phrase; "as he had so much money, why did he not pay you your rent?"

"Ah! Why, indeed?" mocked Miss Gostock. "Young sir, I am afraid you are a bit of a humbug, or you would have suggested at once there was a pretty girl at the bottom of the affair. He left his wife and children, and me—all in the lurch—and went off with a slip of a girl, whom I once took, thinking to train up as a better sort of servant, but was forced to discharge. Oh, the little hussy!"

Somehow I did not fancy I wanted to hear anything more about her late tenant and the pretty girl, and consequently ventured to inquire how the gentleman's defalcations bore upon the question of the rent I should have to pay.

"I'll tell you directly," she said, and as we had by this time arrived at the house, she invited me to enter, and led the way into an old-fashioned parlour that must have been furnished about the time chairs and tables were first invented and which did not contain a single feminine belonging—not even a thimble.

"Sit down," she commanded, and I sat. "I have quite made up my mind," she began, "not to let the farm again, unless I get a premium sufficient to insure me against the chances of possible loss. I mean to ask a very low rent and—a premium."

"And what amount of premium do you expect?" I inquired doubtfully.

"I want—" and here Miss Gostock named a sum which fairly took my breath away.

"In that case," I said as soon as I got it again, "it is useless to prolong this interview; I can only express my regret for having intruded, and wish you good morning." And arising, I bowed myself out when she stopped me.

"Don't be so fast," she cried, "I only said what I wanted. Now what are you prepared to give?"

"I can't be buyer and seller too," I answered, repeating a phrase the precise meaning of which, it may here be confessed, I have never been able exactly to understand.

"Nonsense," exclaimed Miss Gostock—I am really afraid the lady used a stronger term—"if you are anything of a man of business, fit at all to commence farming, you must have an idea on the subject. You shall have the land at a pound an acre, and you will give me for premium—come, how much?"

By what mental process I instantly jumped to an amount it would be impossible to say, but I did mention one which elicited from Miss Gostock the remark:

"That won't do at any price."

"Very well, then," I said, "we need not talk any more about the matter."

"But what *will* you give?" asked the lady.

"I have told you," was my answer, "and I am not given either to haggling or beating down."

"You won't make a good farmer," she observed.

"If a farmer's time were of any value, which it generally seems as if it were not," I answered, "he would not waste it in splitting a six-pence."

She laughed, and her laugh was not musical.

"Come now," she said, "make another bid."

"No," I replied, "I have made one and that is enough. I won't offer another penny."

"Done then," cried Miss Gostock, "I accept your offer—we'll sign a little memorandum of agreement, and the formal deeds can be prepared afterwards. You'll pay a deposit, I suppose?"

I was so totally taken aback by her acceptance of my offer I could only stammer out I was willing to do anything that might be usual.

"It does not matter much whether it is usual or not," she said; "either pay it or I won't keep the place for you. I am not going to have my land lying idle and my time taken up for your pleasure."

"I have no objection to paying you a deposit," I answered.

"That's right," she exclaimed; "now if you will just hand me over the writing-desk we can settle the matter, so far as those thieves and lawyers will let us, in five minutes."

Like one in a dream I sat and watched Miss Gostock while she wrote. Nothing about the transaction seemed to me real. The farm itself resembled nothing I had ever before seen with my waking eyes, and Miss Gostock appeared to me but as some monstrous figure in a story of giants and hobgoblins. The man's coat, the woman's skirt, the hobnailed shoes, the grisly hair, the old straw hat, the bare, unfurnished room, the bright sunshine outside, all struck me as mere accessories in a play—as nothing which had any hold on the outside, everyday world.

It was drawn—we signed our names. I handed Miss Gostock over a cheque. She locked one document in an iron box let into the wall, and handed me the other, adding, as a rider, a word of caution about keeping it safe and taking care it was not lost."

Then she went to a corner cupboard, and producing a square decanter half full of spirits, set that and two tumblers on the table.

"You don't like much water, I suppose," she said, pouring out a measure which frightened me.

"I could not touch it, thank you, Miss Gostock," I exclaimed; "I dare not do so; I should never get back to Whittleby."

For answer she only looked at me contemptuously and said, "D—d nonsense."

"No nonsense, indeed," I persisted; "I am not accustomed to anything of that sort."

Miss Gostock laughed again, then crossing to the sideboard she returned with a jug of water, a very small portion of the contents of which she mixed with the stronger liquor, and raised the glass to her lips.

"To your good health and prosperity," she said, and in one instant the fiery potion was swallowed.

"You'll mend of all that," she remarked, as she laid down her glass, and wiped her lips in the simplest manner by passing the back of her hand over them.

"I hope not, Miss Gostock," I ventured to observe.

"Why, you look quite shocked," she said; "did you never see a lady take a mouthful of brandy before?"

I ventured to hint that I had not, more particularly so early in the morning.

"Pooh!" she said. "Early in the morning or late at night, where's the difference? However, there was a time when I—but that was before I had come through so much trouble. Good-bye for the present, and I hope we shall get on well together."

I answered I trusted we should, and was half-way to the hall-door, when she called me back.

"I forgot to ask you if you were married," she said.

"Yes, I have been married some years," I answered.

"That's a pity," she remarked, and dismissed me with a wave of her hand.

"What on earth would have happened had I not been married?" I considered as I hurried down the drive. "Surely she never

contemplated proposing to me herself? But nothing she could do would surprise me."

II

There were some repairs I had mentioned it would be necessary to have executed before I came to live at Nut Bush Farm, but when I found Miss Gostock intended to do them herself—nay, was doing them all herself—I felt thunderstruck.

On one memorable occasion I came upon her with a red handkerchief tied round her head, standing at a carpenter's bench in a stable yard, planing away, under a sun which would have killed anybody but a negro or my landlady.

She painted the gates, and put sash lines in some of the windows; she took off the locks, oiled, and replaced them; she mowed the lawn, and offered to teach me how to mow; and lastly, she showed me a book where she charged herself and paid herself for every hour's work done.

"I've made at least twenty pounds out of your place," she said triumphantly. "Higgs at Whittleby would not have charged me a half-penny less for the repairs. The tradesmen here won't give me a contract—they say it is just time thrown away, but I know that would have been about his figure. Well, the place is ready for you now, and if you take my advice, you'll get your grass up as soon as possible. It's a splendid crop, and if you hire hands enough, not a drop of rain need spoil it. If this weather stands you might cut one day and carry the next."

I took her advice, and stacked my hay in magnificent condition. Miss Gostock was good enough to come over and superintend the building of the stack, and threatened to split one man's head open with the pitchfork, and proposed burying another—she called him a "lazy blackguard"—under a pile of hay.

"I will say this much for Hascot," she remarked, as we stood together beside the stream; "he was a good farmer; where will you see better or cleaner land? A pattern I call it—and to lose his whole future for the sake of a girl like Sally Powner; leaving his wife and children on the parish, too!"

"You don't mean that?" I said.

"Indeed I do. They are all at Crayshill. The authorities did talk of shifting them, but I know nothing about what they have done."

I stood appalled. I thought of my own poor wife and the

little lad, and wondered if any Sally on the face of the earth could make me desert them.

"It has given the place a bad sort of name," remarked Miss Gostock, looking at me sideways: "but, of course, that does not signify anything to you."

"Oh, of course not," I agreed.

"And don't you be minding any stories; there are always a lot of stories going about places."

I said I did not mind stories. I had lived too long in London to pay much attention to them.

"That's right," remarked Miss Gostock, and negating my offer to see her home she started off to Chalmont.

It was not half an hour after her departure when I happened to be walking slowly round the meadows, from which the newly mown hay had been carted, that I heard the rumour which vexed me—"Nut Bush Farm haunted." I thought, "I said the whole thing was too good to last."

"What, Jack, lost in reverie?" cried my sister, who had come up from Devonshire to keep me company, and help to get the furniture a little to rights, entering at the moment, carrying lights; "supper will be ready in a minute, and you can dream as much as you like after you have had something to eat."

I did not say anything to her about my trouble, which was then indeed no bigger than a man's hand, but which grew and grew till it attained terrible proportions.

What was I to do with my wife and child? I never could bring them to a place reputed to be haunted. All in vain I sauntered up and down the Beech Walk night after night; walked through the wood—as a rule selected that route when I went to Whittleby. It did not produce the slightest effect. Not a farm servant but eschewed that path townward; not a girl but preferred spending her Sunday at home rather than venture under the interlacing branches of the beech trees, or through the dark recesses of the wood.

It was becoming serious—I did not know what to do.

One wet afternoon Lolly came in draggled but beaming.

"I've made a new acquaintance, Jack," she said; "a Mrs. Waite—such a nice creature, but in dreadfully bad health. It came on to rain when I was coming home, so I took refuge under a great tree at the gate of a most picturesque old house. I had not stood there long before a servant with an umbrella appeared at the porch to ask if I would not please to walk in until the

storm abated. I waited there ever so long, and we had such a pleasant talk. She is a most delightful woman, with a melancholy, pathetic sort of expression that has been haunting me ever since. She apologised for not having called—said she was not strong and could not walk so far. They keep no conveyance she can drive. Mr. Waite, who is not at home at present, rides into Whittleby when anything is wanted.

"I hoped she would not think of standing on ceremony with me. I was only a farmer's daughter, and accustomed to plain homely ways, and I asked her if I might walk around and bid her good-bye before I went home."

"You must not go home yet, Lolly," I cried, alarmed; "what in the world should I do without you?"

"Well, you would be a lonely boy," she answered, complacently, "with no one to sew on a button or darn your socks, or make you eat or go to bed, or do anything you ought to do."

I had not spoken a word to her about the report which was troubling me, and I knew there must be times when she wondered why I did not go up to London and fetch my wife and child to enjoy the bright summer-time; but Lolly was as good as gold, and never asked me a question, or even indirectly inquired if Lucy and I had quarrelled, as many another sister might.

She was as pleasant and fresh to look upon as a spring morning, with her pretty brown hair smoothly braided, her cotton or muslin dresses never soiled or crumpled, but as nice as though the laundress had that moment sent them home—a rose in her belt and her hand never idle—for ever busy with curtain or blind, or something her housewifely eyes thought had need of making or mending.

About ten days after that showery afternoon when she found shelter under Mr. Waite's hospitable roof, I felt surprised when, entering the parlour a few minutes before our early dinner, I found Lolly standing beside one of the windows apparently hopelessly lost in the depths of a brown study.

"Why, Lolly," I exclaimed, finding she took no notice of me, "where have you gone to now? A penny for your thoughts, young lady."

"They are not worth a penny," she said, and turning from the window took some work and sat down at a little distance from the spot where I was standing.

I was so accustomed to women, even the best and gayest of them, having occasional fits of temper or depression—times when silence on my part seemed the truest wisdom—that, taking no notice of my sister's manner, I occupied myself with the newspaper till dinner was announced.

During the progress of that meal she talked little and ate still less, but when I was leaving the room, in order to go out to a field of barley where the reapers were at work, she asked me to stop a moment.

"I want to speak to you, Jack," she said.

"Speak, then," I answered, with that lack of ceremony which obtains amongst brothers and sisters.

She hesitated for a moment, but did not speak.

"What on earth is the matter with you, Lolly?" I exclaimed. "Are you sick, or cross, or sorry, or what?"

"If it must be one of the four," she answered, with a dash of her usual manner, "it is 'or what,' Jack," and she came close up to where I stood and took me sorrowfully by the button-hole.

"Well?" I said, amused, for this had always been a favourite habit of Lolly's when she wanted anything from one of the males of her family.

"Jack, you won't laugh at me?"

"I feel much more inclined to be cross with you," I answered. "What are you beating about the bush for, Lolly?"

She lifted her fair face a moment and I saw she was crying.

"Lolly, Lolly!" I cried, clasping her to my heart, "what is it, dear? Have you bad news from home, or have you heard anything about Lucy or the boy? Don't keep me in suspense, there's a darling. No matter what has happened, let me know the worst."

She smiled through her tears, and Lolly has the rarest smile! It quieted my anxious heart in a moment, even before she said:

"No, Jack—it is nothing about home, or Lucy, or Teddy, but—but—but—" and then she relinquished her hold on the button-hole, and fingered each button on the front of my coat carefully and lingeringly. "Did you ever hear—Jack—anybody say anything about this place?"

I knew in a moment what she meant; I knew the cursed tattle had reached her ears, but I only asked:

"What sort of thing, Lolly?"

She did not answer me; instead, she put another question.

"Is that the reason you have not brought Lucy down?"

I felt vexed—but I had so much confidence in her good sense, I could not avoid answering without a moment's delay.

"Well, yes; I do not want her to come till this foolish report has completely died away."

"Are you quite sure it is a foolish report?" she inquired.

"Why, of course; it could not be anything else."

She did not speak immediately, then all at once:

"Jack," she said, "I must tell you something. Lock the door that we may not be interrupted."

"No," I answered; "come into the barley field. Don't you remember Mr. Fenimore Cooper advised, if you want to talk secrets, choose the middle of a plain?"

I tried to put on a good face on the matter, but the sight of Lolly's tears, the sound of Lolly's doleful voice, darkened my very heart. What had she to tell me which required locked doors or the greater privacy of a half-reaped barley field. I could trust my sister—she was no fool—and I felt perfectly satisfied that no old woman's story had wrought the effect produced on her.

"Now, Lolly," I said, as we paced side by side along the top of the barley field in a solitude all the more complete because life and plenty of it was close at hand.

"You know what they say about the place, Jack?"

This was interrogative, and so I answered. "Well, no, Lolly, I can't say that I do, for the very good reason that I have always refused to listen to the gossip. What do they say?"

"That a man haunts the Beech Walk, the long meadow, and the wood."

"Yes, I have heard that," I replied.

"And they say further, the man is Mr. Hascot, the late tenant."

"But he is not dead," I exclaimed; "how, then, can they see his ghost?"

"I cannot tell. I know nothing but what I saw this morning. After breakfast I went to Whittleby, and as I came back I observed a man before me on the road. Following him, I noticed a curious thing, that none of the people he met made way for him or he for them. He walked straight on, without any regard to the persons on the side path, and yet no one seemed to come into collision with him. When I reached the field path I saw

him going on still at the same pace. He did not look right or left, and did not seem to walk—the motion was gliding—”

“Yes, dear.”

“He went on, and so did I, till we reached the hollow where the nut-bushes grow, then he disappeared from sight. I looked down among the trees, thinking I should be able to catch a glimpse of his figure through the underwood, but no, I could see no sign of him, neither could I hear any. Everything was as still as death; it seemed to me that my ear had a spell of silence laid upon it.”

“And then?, I asked hoarsely, as she paused.

“Why, Jack, I walked on and crossed the little footbridge and was just turning into the Beech Walk when the same man bustled suddenly across my path, so close to me if I had put out my hands I could have touched him. I drew back, frightened for a minute, then, as he had not seemed to see me, I turned and looked at him as he sped along down the little winding path to the wood. I thought he must be some silly creature, some harmless sort of idiot, to be running here and there without any apparent object. All at once, as he neared the wood, he stopped, and, half wheeling round, beckoned to me to follow him.”

“You did not, Lolly?”

“No, I was afraid. I walked a few steps quietly till I got among the beech trees and so screened from sight, and then I began to run. I could not run fast, for my knees trembled under me; but still I did run as far nearly as that seat round the ‘Priest’s Tree.’ I had not got quite up to the seat when I saw a man rise from it and stand upright as if waiting for me. *It was the same person, Jack!* I recognized him instantly, though I had not seen his face clearly before. He stood quiet for a moment, and then, with the same gliding motion, silently disappeared.”

“Someone must be playing a very nice game about Nut Bush Farm,” I exclaimed.

“Perhaps so, dear,” she said doubtfully.

“Why, Lolly, you don’t believe it was a ghost you met in the broad daylight?” I cried incredulously.

“I don’t think it was a living man, Jack,” she answered.

“Living or dead, he dare not bring himself into close quarters with me,” was my somewhat braggart remark. “Why, Lolly, I have walked the ground day after day and night after night in the hope of seeing your friend, and not a sign of an intruder,

in the flesh or out of it, could I find. Put the matter away, child, and don't ramble in that direction again. If I can ascertain the name of the person who is trying to frighten the household and disgust me with Nut Bush Farm he shall go to jail if the magistrates are of my way of thinking. Now, as you have told me this terrible story, and we have reduced your great mountain to a molehill, I will walk back with you to the house."

She did not make any reply: we talked over indifferent matters as we paced along. I went with her into the pleasant sunshiny drawing-room and looked her out a book and made her promise to read something amusing; then I was going when she put up her lips for me to kiss her, and said—

"Jack, you won't run any risks?"

"Risks—pooh, you silly little woman!" I answered; and so left my sister and repaired to the barley field once more.

When it was time for the men to leave off work I noticed that one after another began to take a path leading immediately to the main road, which was a very circuitous route to the hamlet, where most of them had either cottages or lodgings.

I noticed this for some time, and then asked a brawny young fellow.

"Why don't you go home through the Beech Walk? It is not above half the distance."

He smiled and made some almost unintelligible answer.

"Why are you all afraid of taking the shortest way," I remarked, "seeing there are enough of you to put half a dozen ghosts to the rout?"

"Likely, sir," was the answer; "but the old master was a hard man living, and there is not many would care to meet him dead."

"What old master?" I inquired.

"Mr. Hascot: it's him as walks. I saw him plain as I see you now, sir, one moonlight night, just this side of the wood, and so did Nat Tyler and James Monsey, and James Monsey's father—wise Ben."

"But Mr. Hascot is not dead; how can he 'walk,' as you call it?" was my natural exclamation.

"If he is living, then, sir, where is he?" asked the man. "There is nobody can tell that, and there is a many, especially just lately, thinks he must have been made away with. He had a cruel lot of money about him—where is all that money gone to?"

The fellow had waxed quite earnest in his interrogations, and really for the first time the singularity of Mr. Hascot's disappearance seemed to strike me.

I said, after an instant's pause, "The money is wherever he is. He went off with some girl, did he not?"

"It suited the old people to say so," he answered; "but there is many a one thinks they know more about the matter than is good for them. I can't help hearing, and one of the neighbours did say Mrs. Ockfield was seen in church last Sunday with a new dress on and a shawl any lady might have worn."

"And who is Mrs. Ockfield?" I inquired.

"Why, Sally Powner's grandmother. The people treated the girl shameful while she was with them, and now they want to make her out no better than she should be."

And with a wrathful look the young man, who I subsequently discovered had long been fond of Sally, took up his coat and his tin bottle and his sickle, and with a brief "I think I'll be going, sir, good night," departed.

It was easy to return to the house, but I found it impossible to shake the effect produced by this dialogue off my mind.

For the first time I began seriously to consider the manner of Mr. Hascot's disappearance, and more seriously still commenced trying to piece together the various hints I had received as to his character.

A hard man—a hard master, all I ever heard speak considered him, but just, and in the main not unkind. He had sent coals to one widow, and kept a poor old labourer off the parish, and then in a minute, for the sake of a girl's face, left his own wife and children to the mercy of the nearest Union.

As I paced along it seemed to me monstrous, and yet how did it happen that till a few minutes previously I had never heard even a suspicion of foul play?

Was it not more natural to conclude the man must have been made away with, than that, in one brief day, he should have changed his nature and the whole current of his former life?

Upon the other hand, people must have had some strong reason for imagining he was gone off with Miss Powner. The notion of a man disappearing in this way—vanishing as if the earth had opened to receive him and closed again—for the sake of any girl, however attractive, was too unnatural an idea for anyone to have evolved out of his internal consciousness. There

must have been some substratum of fact, and then, upon the other hand, there seemed to me more than a substratum of possibility in the theory started of his having been murdered.

Supposing he had been murdered, I went on to argue, what then? Did I imagine he "walked"? Did I believe he could not rest wherever he was laid?

Pooh—nonsense! It might be that the murderer haunted the place of his crime—that he hovered about to see if his guilt were still undetected, but as to anything in the shape of a ghost ten-anting the Beech Walk, long meadow, and wood, I did not believe it—I could not, and I added, "if I saw it with my own eyes, I would not."

Having arrived at which decided and sensible conclusion, I went in to supper.

Usually a sound sleeper, I found it impossible that night when I lay down to close my eyes. I tossed and turned, threw off the bedclothes under the impression I was too hot and drew them tight up round me at the next instant, feeling cold. I tried to think of my crops, of my land, of my wife, of my boy, of my future—all in vain. A dark shadow, a wall-like night stood between me and all the ordinary interests of my life—I could not get the notion of Mr. Hascot's strange disappearance out of my mind. I wondered if there was anything about the place which made it in the slightest degree probable I should ever learn to forget the wife who loved, the boy who was dependent on me. Should I ever begin to think I might have done better as regards my choice of a wife, that it would be nicer to have healthy merry children than my affectionate delicate lad?

When I got to this point, I could stand it no longer. I felt as though some mocking spirit were taking possession of me, which eventually would destroy all my peace of mind, if I did not cast it out promptly and effectually.

I would not lie there supine to let any demon torment me; and, accordingly, springing to the floor, I dressed in hot haste, and flinging wide the window, looked out over a landscape bathed in the clear light of a most lovely moon.

"How beautiful!" I thought. "I have never yet seen the farm by night, I'll just go and take a stroll round it and then turn in again—after a short walk I shall likely be able to sleep."

So saying, I slipped downstairs, closed the hall door softly after me, and went out into the moonlight.

III

As I stood upon the lawn, looking around with a keen and subtle pleasure, I felt, almost for the first time in my life, the full charm and beauty of night. Every object was as clearly revealed as though the time had been noon instead of an hour past midnight, but there lay a mystic spell on tree and field and stream the garish day could never equal. It was a fairy light and a fairy scene, and it would scarcely have astonished me to see fantastic elves issue from the foxglove's flowers or dart from the shelter of concealing leaves and dance a measure on the emerald sward.

For a minute I felt—as I fancy many and many a commonplace man must have done when first wedded to some miracle of grace and beauty—a sense of amazement and unreality.

All this loveliness was mine—the moonlit lawn—the stream murmuring through the fir plantation, singing soft melodies as it pursued its glittering way—the trees with a silvery gleam tinting their foliage—the roses giving out their sweetest, tenderest perfumes—the wonderful silence around—the fresh, pure air—the soft night wind—the prosperity with which God had blessed me. My heart grew full, as I turned and gazed first on this side and then on that, and I felt vexed and angry to remember I had ever suffered myself to listen to idle stories and to be made uncomfortable by reason of village gossip.

On such a night it really seemed a shame to go to bed, and, accordingly, though the restlessness which first induced me to rise had vanished, and in doing so left the most soothing calm behind, I wandered on away from the house, now beside the stream, and again across a meadow, where faint odours from the lately carried hay still lingered.

Still the same unreal light over field and copse—still the same witching glamour—still the same secret feeling. I was seeing something and experiencing some sensation I might never again recall on this side of the grave!

A most lovely night—one most certainly not for drawn curtains and closed eyelids—one rather for lovers' *tete-a-tete* or a dreamy reverie—for two young hearts to reveal their secrets to each other or one soul to commune alone with God.

Still rambling, I found myself at last beside a stile, opening upon a path, which, winding upwards, led past the hollow where the nut trees grew, and then joined the footpath leading through

the long field to Whittleby. The long field was the last in that direction belonging to Nut Bush Farm. It joined upon a portion of the land surrounding Chalmont, and the field path continued consequently to pass through Miss Costock's property till the main road was reached. It cut off a long distance, and had been used generally by the inhabitants of the villages and hamlets dotted about my place until the rumour being circulated that something might be "seen" or "met" deterred people from venturing by a route concerning which such evil things were whispered. I had walked it constantly, but on account of the time it saved and also in order to set a good example to my labourers and my neighbours, but I might have saved my pains.

I was regarded merely as foolhardy, and I knew people generally supposed I should one day have cause to repent my temerity.

As I cleared the stile and began winding my upward way to the higher ground beyond, the thought did strike me what a likely place for a murder Nut Bush Hollow looked. It was a deep excavation, out of which, as one supposed it to be natural, hundreds and thousands of loads of earth must at some time or other have been carted. From top to bottom it was clothed with nut trees—they grew on every side, and in thick, almost impenetrable masses. For years and years they seemed to have had no care bestowed on them, the Hollow forming in this respect a remarkable contrast to the rest of Mr. Hascot's careful farming, and, as a fir plantation ran along the base of the Hollow, while the moon's light fell clear and full on some of the bushes, the others lay in densest shadow.

The road that once led down into the pit was now completely overgrown with nut trees which grew luxuriantly to the very edge of the Beech Walk, and threatened ere long to push their way between the trunks of the great trees, which were the beauty and the pride of my lovely farm.

At one time, so far as I could understand, the nut bushes had the whole place almost to themselves, and old inhabitants told me that formerly, in the days when their parents were boys and girls, the nuts used to pay the whole of the rent. As years passed, however, whether from want of care or some natural cause, they gradually ceased to bear, and had to be cut down and cleared off the ground—those in the dell, however, being suffered to remain, the hollow being useless for husbandry, and

the bushes which flourished there producing a crop of nuts sufficient for the farmer's family.

All this recurred to my mind as I stood for a moment and looked down into the depths of rustling green below me. I thought of the boys who must have gone nutting there, of all the nests birds had built in the branches so closely interlaced, of the summer's suns which had shone full and strong upon that mass of foliage, of the winter's snows which had lain heavy on twig and stem and heaped the strong roots in a warm covering of purest white.

And then the former idea again asserted itself—what a splendid place for a tragedy; a sudden blow—a swift stab—even a treacherous push—and the deed could be done—a man might be alive and well one minute, and dead the next!

False friend, or secret enemy; rival or thief, it was competent for either in such a place at any lonely hour to send a man upon his last long journey. Had Mr. Hascot been so served? Down, far down, was he lying in a quiet, dreamless sleep? At that very moment was there anyone starting from fitful slumber to grapple with his remorse for crime committed, or shrink with horror from the dread of detection?

"Where was my fancy leading me?" I suddenly asked myself. This was worse than in my own chamber preventing the night watches. Since I had been standing there my heart felt heavier than when tossing from side to side in bed, and wooing unsuccessfully the slumber which refused to come for my asking.

What folly! what nonsense! and into what insane course of speculation had I not embarked. I would leave the eerie place and get once again into the full light of the moon's bright beams.

Hush! hark! what was that? deep down amongst the under-wood—a rustle, a rush, and a scurry—then silence—then a stealthy movement amongst the bushes—then whilst I was peering down into the abyss lined with waving green below, *something* passed by me swiftly, something which brought with it a cold chill as though the hand of one dead had been laid suddenly on my heart.

Instantly I turned and looked around. There was not a living thing in sight—neither on the path, nor on the sward, nor on the hillside, nor skirting the horizon as I turned my eyes upward.

For a moment I stood still in order to steady my nerves, then reassuring myself with the thought it must have been an animal of some kind, I completed the remainder of the ascent without further delay.

"The ghost, I suspect," I said to myself as I reached the long field and the path leading back to the farm, "will resolve itself into a hare or pheasant—is not the whirr of a cock pheasant rising for instance, enough, when coming unexpectedly, to frighten any nervous person out of his wits? And might not a hare, or a cat, or, better still, a stoat—yes, a stoat, with its gliding, almost noiseless, movements—mimic the footfalls of a suppositious ghost?"

By this time I had gained the summit of the incline, and slightly out of breath with breasting the ascent, stood for a moment contemplating the exquisite panorama stretched out beneath me. I linger on that moment because it was the last time I ever saw beauty in the moonlight. Now I cannot endure the silvery gleam of the queen of night—weird, mournful, fantastic if you like, but to be desired—no.

Whenever possible I draw the blinds and close the shutters, yet withal on moonlight nights I cannot sleep, the horror of darkness is to my mind nothing in comparison to the terror of a full moon. But I drivel; let me hasten on.

From the crest of the hill I could see lying below a valley of dream-like beauty—woods in the foreground—a champagne country spreading away into the indefinite distance—a stream winding in and out, dancing and glittering under the moon's beams—a line of hills dimly seen against the horizon, and already a streak of light appearing above them the first faint harbinger of dawn.

"It is morning, then, already," I said, and with the words turned my face homewards. As I did so I saw before me on the path—*clearly*—the figure of a man.

He was walking rapidly and I hurried my pace in order to overtake him. Now to this part of the story I desire to draw particular attention. *Let me hurry as I might I never seemed able to get a foot nearer to him.*

At intervals he paused, as if on purpose to assist my desire, but the moment I seemed gaining upon him the distance between us suddenly increased. I could not tell how he did it, the fact only remained—it was like pursuing some phantom in a dream.

All at once when he reached the bridge he stood quite still. He did not move hand or limb as I drew near—the way was so narrow I knew I should have to touch him in passing; nevertheless, I pressed forward. My foot was on the bridge—I was close to him—I felt my breath coming thick and fast—I clasped a stick I had picked up on the plantation firmly in my hand—I stopped, intending to speak—I opened my mouth, intending to do so—and then—then—without any movement on his part—I was alone!

Yes, as totally alone as though he had never stood on the bridge—never preceded me along the field-path—never loitered upon my footsteps—never paused for my coming.

I was appalled.

“Lord, what is this?” I thought. “Am I going mad?” I felt as if I were. On my honour, I know I was as nearly insane at that moment as a man ever can be who is still in the possession of his senses.

Beyond lay the farm of which in my folly I had felt so proud to be the owner, where I once meant to be so happy and win health for my wife and strength for my boy. I saw the Beech Walk I had gloried in—the ricks of hay it seemed so good to get thatched geometrically as only one man in the neighbourhood was said to be able to lay the straw.

What was farm, or riches, or beech trees, or anything, to me now? Over the place there seemed a curse—better the meanest cottage than a palace with such accessories.

If I had been incredulous before, I was not so now—I could not distrust the evidence of my own eyes—and yet as I walked along, I tried after a minute or two to persuade myself imagination had been playing some juggler’s trick with me. The moon, I argued, always lent herself readily to a game of hide-and-seek. She is always open to join in fantastic gambols with shadows—with thorn bushes—and a waving branch—aye, even with a clump of gorse. I must have been mistaken—I had been thinking weird thoughts as I stood by that dismal dell—I had seen no man walking—beheld no figure disappear!

Just as I arrived at this conclusion I beheld someone coming towards me down the Beech Walk. It was a man walking leisurely with a firm, free step. The sight did me good. Here was something tangible—something to question. I stood still, in the middle of the path—the Beech Walk being rather a grassy-glade

with a narrow footway dividing it, than anything usually understood by the term walk—so that I might speak to the intruder when he drew near, and ask him what he meant by trespassing on my property, more especially at such an hour. There were no public rights on my land except as regarded the path across the long field and through the wood. No one had any right or business to be in the Beech Walk, by day or night, save those employed about the farm, and this person was a gentleman; even in the distance I could distinguish that. As he came closer I saw he was dressed in a loose Palmerston suit, that he wore a low-crowned hat, and that he carried a light cane. The moonbeams dancing down amongst the branches and between the leaves fell full upon his face, and catching sight of a ring he had on his right hand, made it glitter with as many different colours as a prism.

A middle-aged man, so far as I could judge, with a set, determined expression of countenance, dark hair, no beard or whiskers, or a small moustache. A total stranger to me. I had never seen him nor any one like him in the neighbourhood. Who could he be, and what in the wide world was he doing on my premises at that unearthly hour of the morning?

He came straight on, never moving to right or left—taking no more notice of me than if he had been blind. His easy indifference, his contemptuous coolness, angered me, and planting myself a little more in his way, I began:

“Are you aware, sir—”

I got no further. Without swerving in the slightest degree from the path, he passed me! I felt something like a cold mist touch me for an instant, and the next, I saw him pursuing his steady walk down the centre of the glade. I was sick with fear, but for all that I ran after him faster than I had ever done since boyhood.

All to no purpose! I might as well have tried to catch the wind. Just where three ways joined I stood still and looked around. I was quite alone! Neither sign nor token of the intruder could I discover. On my left lay the dell where the nut trees grew, and above it the field path to Whittleby showing white and clear in the moonlight; close at hand was the bridge; straight in front the wood looked dark and solemn. Between me and it lay a little hollow, down which a narrow path wound tortuously. As I gazed I saw that, where a moment before

no one had been, a man was walking now. But I could not follow. My limbs refused their office. He turned his head, and lifting his hand on which the ring glittered, beckoned me to come. He might have asked one seized with paralysis. On the confines of the wood he stood motionless as if awaiting my approach; then, when I made no sign of movement, he wrung his hand with a despairing gesture, and disappeared.

At the same moment, moon, dell, bridge, and stream faded from my sight—and I fainted.

IV

It was not much past eight o'clock when I knocked at Miss Gostock's hall door, and asked if I could see that lady.

After that terrible night vision I had made up my mind. Behind Mr. Hascot's disappearance I felt sure there lurked some terrible tragedy—living, no man should have implored my help with such passionate earnestness without avail, and if indeed one had appeared to me from the dead I would right him if I could.

But never for a moment did I then think of giving up the farm. The resolve I had come to seemed to have braced up my courage—let what might come or go, let crops remain unreaped and men neglect their labour, let monetary loss and weary, anxious days be in store if they could, I meant to go on to the end.

The first step on my road clearly led in the direction of Miss Gostock's house. She alone could give me all the information I required—to her alone could I speak freely and fully about what I had seen.

I was instantly admitted, and found the lady, as I had expected, at breakfast. It was her habit, I knew, to partake of that meal while the labourers she employed were similarly engaged. She was attired in an easy *negligee* of a white shirt and linen coat which had formerly belonged to her brother. She was not taking tea or coffee like any other woman—but was engaged upon about a pound of smoking steak which she ate covered with mustard and washed down with copious draughts of home-brewed beer.

She received me cordially and invited me to join in the banquet—a request I ungallantly declined, eliciting in return the remark I should never be good for much till I ceased living on "slops" and took to "good old English" fare.

After these preliminaries I drew my chair near the table and said:

"I want you to give me some information, Miss Gostock, about my predecessor."

"What sort of information?" she asked, with a species of frost at once coming over her manner.

"Can you tell me anything about his personal appearance?"

"Why do you ask?"

I did not immediately answer, and seeing my hesitation she went on:

"Because if you mean to tell me you or anyone else have seen him about your place I would not believe it if you swore it—there!"

"I do not ask you to believe it, Miss Gostock," I said.

"And I give you fair warning, it is of no use coming here and asking me to relieve you of your bargain, because I won't do it. I like you well enough—better than I ever liked a tenant; but I don't intend to be a shilling out of pocket by you."

"I hope you never may be," I answered meekly.

"I'll take very good care I never am," she retorted; "and so don't come here talking about Mr. Hascot. He served me a dirty turn, and I would not put it one bit past him to try and get the place a bad name."

"Will you tell me what sort of looking man he was?" I asked determinedly.

"No, I won't," she snapped, and while she spoke she rose, drained the last drop out of a pewter measure, and after tossing on the straw hat with a defiant gesture, thumped its crown well down on her head. I took the hint, and rising said I must endeavour to ascertain the particulars I wanted elsewhere.

"You won't ascertain them from me," retorted Miss Gostock, and so we parted as we had never done before—on bad terms.

Considerably perplexed, I walked out of the house. A rebuff of this sort was certainly the last thing I could have expected, and as I paced along I puzzled myself by trying to account for Miss Gostock's extraordinary conduct, and anxiously considering what I was to do under present circumstances. All at once the recollection of mine host of the "Bunch of Hops" flashed across my mind. He must have seen Mr. Hascot often, and I could address a few casual questions to him without exciting his curiosity.

No sooner thought than done. Turning my face towards Whittleby, I stepped briskly on.

"Did I ever see Mr. Hascot?" repeated the landlord—when after some general conversation about politics, the weather, the crops, and many other subjects, I adroitly turned it upon the late tenant of Nut Bush Farm. "Often, sir. I never had much communication with him, for he was one of your stand-alooof, keep-your-distance, sort of gentlemen—fair dealing and honourable—but neither free nor generous. He has often sat where you are sitting now, sir, and not so much as said—'It is a fine day,' or, 'I am afraid we shall have rain.'"

"You had but to see him walking down the street to know what he was. As erect as a grenadier, with a firm easy sort of marching step, he looked every inch a gentleman—just in his everyday clothes, a *Palmerston suit* and a *round hat*, he was, as many a one said, fit to go to court. His hands were not a bit like a farmer's, but white and delicate as any lady's, and the *diamond ring* he wore flashed like a star when he stroked the *slight bit of a moustache* that was *all the hair he had upon his face*. No—not a handsome gentleman, but fine looking, with a presence—bless and save us all to think of his giving up everything for the sake of that slip of a girl."

"She was very pretty, wasn't she?" I inquired.

"Beautiful—we all said she was too pretty to come to any good. The old grandmother, you see, had serious cause for keeping so tight a hold over her, but it was in her, and 'what's bred in bone,' you know, sir."

"And you really think they did go off together?"

"Oh, yes, sir; nobody had ever any doubt about that."

On this subject his tone was so decided I felt it was useless to continue the conversation, and having paid him for the modest refreshment of which I had partaken I sauntered down the High Street and turned into the Bank, where I thought of opening an account.

When I had settled all preliminaries with the manager he saved me the trouble of beating about the bush by breaking cover himself and asking if anything had been heard of Mr. Hascot.

"Not that I know of," I answered.

"Curious affair, wasn't it?" he said.

"It appears so, but I have not heard the whole story."

"Well, the whole story is brief," returned the manager. "He comes over here one day and without assigning any reason withdraws the whole of his balance, which was very heavy—is met on the road homeward but never returns home—the same day the girl Powner is also missing—what do you think of all that?"

"It is singular," I said, "very."

"Yes, and to leave his wife and family totally unprovided for."

"I cannot understand that at all."

"Nor I—it was always known he had an extreme partiality for the young person—he and Miss Gostock quarrelled desperately on the subject—but no one could have imagined an attachment of that sort would have led a man so far astray—Hascot more especially. If I had been asked to name the last person in the world likely to make a fool of himself for the sake of a pretty face I should have named the late tenant of Nut Bush Farm."

"There never was a suspicion of foul play," I suggested.

"Oh, dear, no! It was broad daylight when he was last seen on the Whittleby road. The same morning it is known he and the girl were talking earnestly together beside the little wood on your property, and the two persons answering to their description were traced to London, that is to say, a gentleman came forward to say he believed he had travelled up with them as far as New Cross on the afternoon in question."

"He was an affectionate father I have heard," I said.

"A *most* affectionate parent—a most devoted husband. Dear, dear! It is dreadfully sad to think how a bad woman may drag the best of men down to destruction. It is terrible to think of his wife and family being inmates of the Union."

"Yes, and it is terrible to consider not a soul has tried to get them out of it," I answered, a little tartly.

"Hm, perhaps so; but we all know we are contributing to their support," he returned with an effort at jocularly, which, in my then frame of mind seemed singularly *mal-a-propos*.

"There is something in that," I replied with an effort, and leaving the Bank next turned my attention to the Poorhouse at Crayhill.

At that time many persons thought what I did quixotic. It is so much the way of the world to let the innocent suffer for the guilty, that I believe Mr. Hascot's wife might have ended her

days in Crayshill Union but for the action I took in the matter.

Another night I felt I could not rest till I had arranged for a humble lodging she and her family could occupy till I was able to form some plan for their permanent relief. I found her a quiet, ladylike woman, totally unable to give me the slightest clue as to where her husband might be found. "He was just at the stile on the Chalmont fields," she said, "when Mr. Waite met him; no one saw him afterwards, unless it might be the Ockfields, but, of course, there is no information to be got from them. The guardians have tried every possible means to discover his whereabouts without success. My own impression is he and Sally Powner have gone to America, and that some day we may hear from him. He cannot harden his heart for ever and forget—" Here Mrs. Hascot's sentence trailed off into passionate weeping.

"It is too monstrous!" I considered; "the man never did such a thing as desert his wife and children. Someone knows all about the matter," and then in a moment I paused in the course of my meditations.

Was that person Miss Gostock?

It was an ugly idea, and yet it haunted me. When I remembered the woman's masculine strength, when I recalled her furious impetuosity when I asked her a not very exasperating question, as I recalled the way she tossed off that brandy, when I considered her love of money, her eagerness to speak ill of her late tenant, her semi-reference to some great trouble prior to which she was more like other women, or, perhaps, to speak more correctly, less unlike them—doubts came crowding upon my mind.

It was when entering her ground Mr. Hascot was last seen. He had a large sum of money in his possession. She was notoriously fond of rambling about Nut Bush Farm, and what my labouring men called "spying around," which had been the cause of more than one pitched battle between herself and Mr. Hascot.

"The old master could not a-bear her," said one young fellow.

I hated myself for the suspicion; and yet, do what I would, I could not shake it off. Not for a moment did I imagine Miss Gostock had killed her former tenant in cold blood; but it certainly occurred to me that the dell was deep, and the verge treacherous, that it would be easy to push a man over, either by

accident or design, that the nut-bushes grew thick, that a body might lie amongst them till it rotted, ere even the boys who went nutting there season after season, happened to find it.

Should I let the matter drop? No, I decided. With that mute appeal haunting my memory, I should know no rest or peace till I had solved the mystery of Mr. Hascot's disappearance, and cleared his memory from the shameful stain circumstances had cast upon it.

What should I do next? I thought the matter over for a few days, and then decided to call on Mr. Waite, who never had called on me. As usual, he was not at home; but I saw his wife, whom I found just the sort of woman Lolly described—a fair delicate creature who seemed fading into the grave.

She had not much to tell me. It was her husband who saw Mr. Hascot at the Chalmont stile; it was he also who had seen Mr. Hascot and the girl Powner talking together on the morning of their disappearance. It so happened he had often chanced to notice them together before. "She was a very, very pretty girl," Mrs. Waite added, "and I always thought a modest one. She had a very sweet way of speaking—quite above her station—inherited, no doubt, for her father was a gentleman. Poor little Sally!"

The words were not much, but the manner touched me sensibly. I felt drawn to Mrs. Waite from that moment, and told her more of what I had beheld and what I suspected than I had mentioned to anyone else.

As to my doubts concerning Miss Gostock, I was, of course, silent but I said quite plainly I did not believe Mr. Hascot had gone off with any girl or woman either, that I thought he had come to an unfair end, and that I was of opinion the stories circulated, concerning a portion of Nut Bush Farm being haunted, had some foundation in fact.

"Do you believe in ghosts then?" she asked, with a curious smile.

"I believe in the evidence of my senses," I answered, "and I declare to you, Mrs. Waite, that one night, not long since, I saw as plainly as I see you what I can only conclude to have been the semblance of Mr. Hascot."

She did not make any reply, she only turned very pale, and blaming myself for having alarmed one in her feeble state of health, I hastened to apologise and take my leave.

As we shook hands, she retained mine for a moment, and said, "When you hear anything more, if you should, that is, you will tell us, will you not? Naturally we feel interested in the matter, he was such a near neighbour, and—we knew him."

I assured her I would not fail to do so, and left the room.

Before I reached the front door I found I had forgotten one of my gloves, and immediately retraced my steps.

The drawing-room door was ajar, and somewhat unceremoniously, perhaps, I pushed it open and entered.

To my horror and surprise, Mrs. Waite, whom I had left apparently in her ordinary state of languid health, lay full length on the sofa, sobbing as if her heart would break. What I said so indiscreetly had brought on an attack of violent hysterics—a malady with the signs and tokens of which I was not altogether unacquainted.

Silently I stole out of the room without my glove, and left the house, closing the front door noislessly behind me.

A couple of days elapsed, and then I decided to pay a visit to Mrs. Ockfield. If she liked to throw any light on the matter, I felt satisfied she could. It was, to say the least of it, most improbable her grand-daughter, whether she had been murdered or gone away with Mr. Hascot, should disappear and not leave a clue by which her relatives could trace her.

The Ockfields were not liked, I found, and I flattered myself if they had any hand in Mr. Hascot's sudden disappearance I should soon hit on some weak spot in their story.

I found the old woman, who was sixty-seven, and who looked two hundred, standing over her washing tub.

"Can I tell you where my grand-daughter is," she repeated, drawing her hands out of the suds and wiping them on her apron. "Surely, sir, and very glad I am to be able to tell everybody, gentle and simple, where to find our Sally. She is in a good service down in Cheshire. Mr. Hascot got her the place, but we knew nothing about it till yesterday; she left us in a bit of a pet, and said she wouldn't have written me only something seemed to tell her she must. Ah, she'll have a sore heart when she gets my letter and hears how it has been said that the master and she went off together. She thought a deal of the master, did Sally; he was always kind and stood between her and her grandfather."

"Then do you mean to say," I asked, "that she knows nothing of Mr. Hascot's disappearance?"

"Nothing, sir, thank God for all His mercies; the whole of the time since the day she left here she has been in service with a friend of his. You can read her letter if you like."

Though I confess old Mrs. Ockfield neither charmed nor inspired me with confidence, I answered that I should like to see the letter very much indeed.

When I took it in my hand I am bound to say I thought it had been written with a purpose, and intended less for a private than for the public eye, but as I read I fancied there was a ring of truth about the epistle, more especially as the writer made passing reference to a very bitter quarrel which had preceded her departure from the grand-paternal roof.

"It is very strange," I said, as I returned the letter, "it is a most singular coincidence that your grand-daughter and Mr. Hascot should have left Whittleby on the same day, and yet that she should know nothing of his whereabouts, as judging from her letter seems to be the case."

"Are you quite sure Mr. Hascot ever did leave Whittleby sir?" asked the old woman with a vindictive look in her still bright old eyes. "There are those as think he never went very far from home, and the whole truth will come out some day."

"What do you mean?" I exclaimed, surprised.

"Least said soonest mended," she answered shortly; "only I hopes if ever we do know the rights of it, people as do hold their heads high enough, and have had plenty to say about our girl, and us too for that matter, will find things not so pleasant as they find them at present. The master had a heap of money about him, and we know that often those as has are those as wants more."

"I cannot imagine what you are driving at," I said, for I feared every moment she would mention Miss Gostock, and bring her name into the discussion. "If you think Mr. Hascot met with any foul play you ought to go to the police about the matter."

"Maybe I will some time," she answered, "but just now I have my washing to do."

"This will buy you some tea to have afterwards," I said, laying down half-a-crown, and feeling angry with myself to this momentary irritation. After all, the woman had as much right to her suspicions as I had to mine.

Thinking over Miss Powner's letter, I came to the conclusion it might be well to see the young lady for myself. If I went to the address she wrote from I could ascertain at all events whether her statement regarding her employment was correct. Yes, I would take train and travel into Cheshire; I had commenced the investigation and I would follow it to the end.

I travelled so much faster than Mrs. Ockfield's letter—which, indeed, that worthy woman had not then posted—that when I arrived at my journey's end I found the fair Sally in total ignorance of Mr. Hascot's disappearance and the surmises to which her own absence had given rise.

Appearances might be against the girl's truth and honesty, yet I felt she was dealing fairly with me.

"A better gentleman, sir," she said, "than Mr. Hascot never drew breath. And so they set it about he had gone off with me—they little know—they little know! Why, sir, he thought of me and was careful for me as he might for a daughter. The first time I ever saw him grandfather was beating me, and he interfered to save me. He knew they treated me badly, and it was after a dreadful quarrel I had at home he advised me to go away. He gave me a letter to the lady I am now with, and a ten-pound note to pay my travelling expenses and keep something in my pocket. 'You'll be better away from the farm, little girl,' he said the morning I left; 'people are beginning to talk, and we can't shut their mouths if you come running to me every time your grandmother speaks sharply to you.' "

"But why did you not write sooner to your relatives?" I asked.

"Because I was angry with my grandmother, sir, and I thought I would give her a fright. I did not bring any clothes or anything and I hoped—it was a wicked thing I know, sir—but I hoped she would believe I had made away with myself. Just lately, however, I began to consider that if she and grandfather had not treated me well, I was treating them worse, so I made up a parcel of some things my mistress gave me and sent it to them with a letter. I am glad it reached them safely."

"What time was it when you saw Mr. Hascot last?" I inquired.

"About two o'clock, sir, I know that, because he was in a hurry. He had got some news about the Bank at Whittleby not being quite safe, and he said he had too much money there to run any risks of loss. 'Be a good girl,' were the last words he said, and he walked off sharp and quick by the field path to

Whittleby. I stood near the bridge crying for a while. Oh, sir! do you think anything ill can have happened to him?"

For answer, I only said the whole thing seemed most mysterious.

"He'd never have left his wife and children, sir," she went on; "never. He must have been made away with."

"Had he any enemies, do you think?" I asked.

"No, sir; not to say enemies. He was called hard because he would have a day's work for a day's wage, but no one that ever I heard of had a grudge against him. Except Miss Gostock and Mr. Waite, he agreed well with all the people about. He did not like Miss Gostock, and Mr. Waite was always borrowing money from him. Now Mr. Hascot did not mind giving, but he could not bear lending."

I returned to Nut Bush Farm perfectly satisfied that Mr. Hascot had been, as the girl expressed the matter, "made away with." On the threshold of my house I was met with a catalogue of disasters. The female servants had gone in a body; the male professed a dislike to be in the stable-yard in the twilight. Rumour had decided that Nut Bush Farm was an unlucky place even to pass. The cattle were out of condition because the men would not go down the Beech Walk, or turn a single sheep into the long field. Reapers wanted higher wages. The labourers were looking out for other service.

"Poor fellow! This is a nice state of things for you to come home to," said Lolly compassionately. "Even the poachers won't venture into the wood, and the boys don't go nutting."

"I will clear away the nut trees and cut down the wood," I declared savagely.

"I don't know who you are going to get to cut them," answered Lolly, "unless you bring men down from London."

As for Miss Gostock, she only laughed at my dilemma, and said, "You're a pretty fellow to be frightened by a ghost. If he was seen at Chalmont I'd ghost him."

While I was in a state of the most cruel perplexity, I bethought me of my promise to Mrs. Waite, and walked over one day to tell her the result of my inquiries.

I found her at home, and Mr. Waite, for a wonder, in the drawing-room. He was not a bad-looking fellow, and welcomed my visit with a heartiness which ill accorded with the discourtesy he had shown in never calling upon me.

Very succinctly I told what I had done, and where I had been. I mentioned the terms in which Sally Powner spoke of her benefactor. We discussed the whole matter fully—the *pros* and *cons* of anyone knowing Mr. Hascot had such a sum of money on his person, and the possibility of his having been murdered. I mentioned what I had done about Mrs. Hascot, and begged Mr. Waite to afford me his help and co-operation in raising such a sum of money as might start the poor lady in some business.

"I'll do all that lies in my power," he said heartily, shaking hands at the same time, for I had risen to go.

"And for my part," I remarked, "it seems to me there are only two things more I can do to elucidate the mystery, and those are—root every nut-tree out of the dell and set the axe to work in the wood."

There was a second's silence. Then Mrs. Waite dropped to the floor as if she had been shot.

As he stooped over her he and I exchanged glances, and then I *knew*. Mr. Hascot *had* been murdered, and Mr. Waite was the murderer!

That night I was smoking and Lolly at needlework. The parlour windows were wide open, for it was warm, and not a breath of air seemed stirring.

There was a stillness on everything which betokened a coming thunderstorm; and we both were silent, for my mind was busy and Lolly's heart anxious. She did not see, as she said, how I was to get on at all, and for my part I could not tell what I ought to do.

All at once something whizzed through the window furthest from where we sat, and fell noisily to the floor.

"What is that?" Lolly cried, springing to her feet. "Oh, Jack! What is it?"

Surprised and shaken myself, I closed the windows and drew down the blinds before I examined the cause of our alarm. It proved to be an oblong package weighted with a stone. Unfastening it cautiously, for I did not know whether it might not contain some explosive, I came at length to a pocket book. Opening the pocket book, I found it stuffed full of bank notes.

"What are they? Where can they have come from?" exclaimed Lolly.

"They are the notes Mr. Hascot drew from Whittleby bank

the day he disappeared," I answered with a sort of inspiration, but I took no notice of Lolly's last question.

For good or for evil that was a secret which lay between myself and the Waites, and which I have never revealed till now.

If the vessel in which they sailed for New Zealand had not gone to the bottom I should have kept the secret still.

When they were out of the country and the autumn well advanced, I had the wood thoroughly examined, and there in a gully, covered with a mass of leaves and twigs and dead branches, we found Mr. Hascot's body. His watch was in his waistcoat pocket—his ring on his finger; save for these possessions no one could have identified him.

His wife married again about a year afterwards and my brother took Nut Bush Farm off my hands. He says the place never was haunted—that I never saw Mr. Hascot except in my own imagination—that the whole thing originated in a poor state of health and a too credulous disposition!

I leave the reader to judge between us.

THE UNKNOWN LAND

by LEAH BODINE DRAKE

There is a strange, recurring dream
That haunts my sleep. Do what I will
To steer to other shores, I seem
To drift to one, remote and chill,

Unknown to any map. Here run
Rivers of living pearls and jades
Beneath a sky where moon nor sun
Shine on the centaur-cavalcades.

Here I wander, unarmed, alone,
Through glens whose guards are giant toads,
To some half-guessed, half-memorized throne,
Longing and fright my master-goads.

Down from Leonardesque scars
Come the white bands of haunting-sphinx,
To pools like secret emerald stars
Where the great golden peacock drinks,
And the giraffes and white baboons
Feed among stiff, funereal trees
On fruits like little silver moons,
Which the green glowworms suck like bees.

Here the sands quiver with the shock
Of furiously-passing unicorns,
And silens stamp from rock to rock;
And in the hills sound ominous horns

Blown from some thunder-smitten spur.
But what may mean those outlandish notes
I know not—nor whether hide or fur
Cover those unseen monstrous throats.

Challenge or plea, which is that call?
What city builded of ice or flame,
Lorded by lamia or troll,
Forsees my coming and knows my name?

Some night my dream will bid me climb
The last high slope where doom awaits;
And my soul, enchained beyond space and time,
Will hear the clang of the closing gates!

THE DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH

by H. P. LOVECRAFT

(conclusion)

At sight of the incoming galley the crowds on the wharves displayed much eagerness; those with eyes staring intently, and those without eyes wriggling their pink tenacles expectantly. They did not, of course, realize that the black ship had changed hands; for ghouls look much like the horned and hooved almost-humans, and the night-gaunts were all out of sight below. By this time the leaders had fully formed a plan; which was to loose the night-gaunts as soon as the wharf was touched, and then to sail directly away, leaving matters wholly to the instincts of those almost-mindless creatures. Marooned on the rock, the horned flyers would first of all seize whatever living thing they found there, and afterward, quite helpless to think except in terms of the homing instinct, would forget their fears of water and fly swiftly back to the abyss; bearing their noisome prey to appropriate destinations in the dark, from which not much would emerge alive.

The ghoul that was Pickman now went below and gave the night-gaunts their simple instructions, while the ship drew very near to the ominous and malodorous wharves. Presently a fresh stir rose along the waterfront, and Carter saw that the motions of the galley had begun to excite suspicion. Evidently the steersman was not making for the right dock, and probably the watchers had noticed the difference between the hideous ghouls and the almost-human slaves whose places they were taking. Some silent alarm must have been given, for almost at once a horde of the mephitic moon-beasts began to pour from the little black doorways of the windowless houses and down the winding road at the right. A rain of curious javelins struck the galley as the prow hit the wharf, felling two ghouls and slightly wounding another; but at this point all the hatches were thrown open to emit a black cloud of whirring night-gaunts which swarmed over the town like a flock of horned and cyclopean bats.

The jellyish moonbeasts had procured a great pole and were trying to push off the invading ship, but when the night-gaunts struck them they thought of such things no more. It was a very terrible spectacle to see those faceless and rubbery ticklers at their pastime, and tremendously impressive to watch the dense cloud of them spreading through the town and up the winding roadway to the reaches above. Sometimes a group of the black flutterers would drop a toadlike prisoner from aloft by mistake, and the manner in which the victim would burst was highly offensive to the sight and smell. When the last of the night-gaunts had left the galley the ghoulish leaders glibbered an order of withdrawal, and the rowers pulled quietly out of the harbour between the grey headlands while still the town was a chaos of battle and conquest.

The Pickman ghoul allowed several hours for the night-gaunts to make up their rudimentary minds and overcome their fear of flying over the sea, and kept the galley standing about a mile off the jagged rock while he waited, and dressed the wounds of the injured men. Night fell, and the grey twilight gave place to the sickly phosphorescence of low clouds, and all the while the leaders watched the high peaks of that accursed rock for signs of the night-gaunts' flight. Toward morning a black speck was seen hovering timidly over the topmost pinnacle, and shortly afterward the speck had become a swarm. Just before daybreak the swarm seemed to scatter, and within a quarter of an hour it had vanished wholly in the distance toward the north-east. Once or twice something seemed to fall from the thinning swarm into the sea; but Carter did not worry, since he knew from observation that the toadlike moonbeasts cannot swim. At length, when the ghouls were satisfied that all the night-gaunts had left for Sarkomand and the Great Abyss with their doomed burdens, the galley put back into the harbour betwixt the grey headlands; and all the hideous company landed and roamed curiously over the denuded rock with its towers and eyries and fortresses chiselled from the solid stone.

Frightful were the secrets uncovered in those evil and windowless crypts; for the remnants of unfinished pastimes were many, and in various stages of departure from their primal state. Carter put out of the way certain things which were after a fashion alive, and fled precipitately from a few other things about which he could not be very positive. The stench-filled houses were

furnished mostly with grotesque stools and benches carved from moon-trees, and were painted inside with nameless and frantic designs. Countless weapons, implements, and ornaments lay about, including some large idols of solid ruby depicting singular beings not found on the earth. These latter did not, despite their material, invite either appropriation or long inspection; and Carter took the trouble to hammer five of them into very small pieces. The scattered spears and javelins he collected, and with Pickman's approval distributed among the ghouls. Such devices were new to the doglike lopers, but their relative simplicity made them easy to master after a few concise hints.

The upper parts of the rock held more temples than private homes, and in numerous hewn chambers were found terrible carved altars and doubtfully stained fonts and shrines for the worship of things more monstrous than the wild gods atop Kadath. From the rear of one great temple stretched a low black passage which Carter followed far into the rock with a torch till he came to a lightless domed hall of vast proportions, whose vaultings were covered with demoniac carvings and in whose centre yawned a foul and bottomless well like that in the hideous monastery of Leng where broods alone the high-priest not to be described. On the distant shadowy side, beyond the noisome well, he thought he discerned a small door of strangely wrought bronze; but for some reason he felt an unaccountable dread of opening it or even approaching it, and hastened back through the cavern to his unlovely allies as they shambled about with an ease and abandon he could scarcely feel. The ghouls had observed the unfinished pastimes of the moonbeasts, and had profited in their fashion. They had also found a hogshead of potent moon-wine, and were rolling it down to the wharves for removal and later use in diplomatic dealings, though the rescued trio, remembering its effect of them in Dylath-Leen, had warned their company to taste none of it. Of rubies from lunar mines there was a great store, both rough and polished, in one of the vaults near the water; but when the ghouls found they were not good to eat they lost all interest in them. Carter did not try to carry any away, since he knew too much about those which had mined them.

Suddenly there came an excited meeping from the sentries on the wharves, and all the loathsome foragers turned from their tasks to stare seaward and cluster round the waterfront. Betwixt

the grey headlands a fresh black galley was rapidly advancing, and it would be but a moment before the almost-humans on deck would perceive the invasion of the town and give the alarm to the monstrous things below. Fortunately the ghouls still bore the spears and javelins which Carter had distributed amongst them; and at his command, sustained by the being that was Pickman, they now formed a line of battle and prepared to prevent the landing of the ship. Presently a burst of excitement on the galley told of the crew's discovery of the changed state of things, and the instant stoppage of the vessel proved that the superior number of the ghouls had been noted and taken into account. After a moment of hesitation the newcomers silently turned and passed out between the headlands again, but not for an instant did the ghouls imagine that the conflict was averted. Either the dark ship would seek reinforcements or the crew would try to land elsewhere on the island; hence a party of scouts was at once sent up toward the pinnacle to see what the enemy's course would be.

In a very few minutes the ghoul returned breathless to say that the moonbeasts and almost-humans were landing on the outside of the more easterly of the rugged grey headlands, and ascending by hidden paths and ledges which a goat could scarcely tread in safety. Almost immediately afterward the galley was sighted again through the flume-like strait, but only for a second. Then a few moments later, a second messenger panted down from aloft to say that another party was landing on the other headland; both being much more numerous than the size of the galley would seem to allow for. The ship itself, moving slowly with only one sparsely manned tier of oars, soon hove in sight betwixt the cliffs, and lay to in the foetid harbour as if to watch the coming fray and stand by for any possible use.

But this time Carter and Pickman had divided the ghouls into three parties, one to meet each of the two invading columns and one to remain in the town. The first two at once scrambled up the rocks in their respective directions, while the third was subdivided into a land party and a sea party. The sea party, commanded by Carter, boarded the anchored galley and rowed out to meet the undermanned galley of the newcomers; whereat the latter retreated through the strait to the open sea. Carter did not at once pursue it, for he knew he might be needed more acutely near the town.

Meanwhile the frightful detachment of the moonbeasts and almost-humans had lumbered up to the top of the headlands and were shockingly silhouetted on either side against the grey twilight sky. The thin hellish flutes of the invaders had now begun to whine, and the general effect of those hybrid, half-amorphous processions was as nauseating as the actual odour given off by the toadlike lunar blasphemies. Then the two parties of the ghouls swarmed into sight and joined the silhouetted panorama. Javelins began to fly from both sides, and the swelling meeps of the ghouls and the bestial howls of the almost-humans gradually joined the hellish whine of the flutes to form a frantick and indescribable chaos of daemon cacophony. Now and then bodies fell from the narrow ridges of the headlands into the sea outside or the harbour inside, in the latter case being sucked quickly under by certain submarine lurkers whose presence was indicated only by prodigious bubbles.

For half an hour this dual battle raged in the sky, till upon the west cliff the invaders were completely annihilated. On the east cliff, however, where the leader of the moonbeast party appeared to be present, the ghouls had not fared so well, and were slowly retreating to the slopes of the pinnacle proper. Pickman had quickly ordered reinforcements for this front from the party in the town, and these had helped greatly in the earlier stages of the combat. Then, when the western battle was over, the victorious survivors hastened across to the aid of their hard-pressed fellows; turning the tide and forcing the invaders back again along the narrow ridge of the headland. The almost-humans were by this time all slain, but the last of the toadlike horrors fought desperately with the great spears clutched in their powerful and disgusting paws. The time for javelins was now nearly past, and the fight became a hand-to-hand contest of what few spearmen could meet upon that narrow ridge.

As fury and recklessness increased, the number falling into the sea became very great. Those striking the harbour met nameless extinction from the unseen bubblers, but those striking the open sea were able to swim to the foot of the cliffs and land on the tidal rocks, while the hovering galley of the enemy rescued several moonbeasts. The cliffs were unscalable except where the monsters had debarked, so that none of the ghouls on the rocks could rejoin their battle-line. Some were killed by javelins from the hostile galley or from the moonbeasts above, but a few

survived to be rescued. When the surity of the land parties seemed assured, Carter's galley sallied forth between the headlands and drove the hostile ship far out to sea, till by evening the ghoulish chiefs agreed that the island was again clear of them. The hostile galley, meanwhile, had disappeared; and it was decided that the evil jagged rock had better be evacuated before any overwhelming horde of lunar horrors might be assembled and brought against the victors.

So by night Pickman and Carter assembled all the ghouls and counted them with care, finding that over a fourth had been lost in the day's battles. The wounded were placed on bunks in the galley, for Pickman always discouraged the old ghoulish custom of killing and eating one's own wounded, and the able-bodied troops were assigned to the oars or to such other places as they might most usefully fill. Under the low phosphorescent clouds of night the galley sailed, and Carter was not sorry to be departing from the island of unwholesome secrets, whose lightless domed hall with its bottomless well and repellent bronze door lingered restlessly in his fancy. Dawn found the ship in sight of Sarkomand's ruined quays of basalt, where a few night-gaunt sentries still waited, squatting like black horned gargoyles on the broken columns and crumbling sphinxes of that fearful city which lived and died before the years of man.

The ghouls made camp amongst the fallen stones of Sarkomand, despatching a messenger for enough night-gaunts to serve them as steeds. Pickman and the other chiefs were effusive in their gratitude for the aid Carter had lent them. Carter now began to feel that his plans were indeed maturing well, and that he would be able to command the help of these fearsome allies not only in quitting this part of dreamland, but in pursuing his ultimate quest for the gods atop unknown Kadath, and the marvellous sunset city they so strangely withheld from his slumbers. Accordingly he spoke of these things to the ghoulish leaders; telling what he knew of the cold waste wherein Kadath stands and of the monstrous Shantaks and the mountains carven into double-headed images which guard it. He spoke of the fear of Shantaks for night-gaunts, and of how the vast hippocephalic birds fly screaming from the black burrows high up on the gaunt grey peaks that divide Inquanok from hateful Leng. He spoke, too, of the things he had learned concerning night-gaunts from the frescoes in the windowless monastery of the high-priest not

to be described; how even the Great Ones fear them, and how their ruler is not the crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep, at all, but hoary and immemorial Nodens, Lord of the Great Abyss.

All these things Carter glibbered to the assembled ghouls, and presently outlined that request which he had in mind and which he did not think extravagant considering the services he had so lately rendered the rubbery dog-like lopers. He wished very much, he said, for the services of enough night-gaunts to bear him safely through the air past the realm of Shantaks and carven mountains, and up into the cold waste beyond the returning tracks of any other mortal. He desired to fly to the onyx castle atop unknown Kadath in the cold waste to plead with the Great Ones for the sunset city they denied him, and felt sure that the night-gaunts could take him thither without trouble; high above the perils of the plain, and over the hideous double heads of those carven sentinel mountains that squat eternally in the grey dusk. For the horned and faceless creatures there could be no danger from aught of earth since the Great Ones themselves dread them. And even were unexpected things to come from the Other Gods, who are prone to oversee the affairs of earth's milder gods, the night-gaunts need not fear; for the outer hells are indifferent matters to such silent and slippery flyers as own not Nyarlathotep for their master, but bow only to potent and archaic Nodens.

A flock of ten or fifteen night-gaunts, Carter glibbered, would surely be enough to keep any combination of Shantaks at a distance, though perhaps it might be well to have some ghouls in the party to manage the creatures, their ways being better known to their allies than to men. The party could land him at some convenient point within whatever walls that fabulous onyx citadel might have, waiting in the shadows for his return or his signal whilst he ventured inside the castle to give prayer to the gods of earth. If any ghouls chose to escort him into the throne-room of the Great Ones, he would be thankful, for their presence would add weight and importance to his plea. He would not, however, insist upon this but merely wished transportation to and from the castle atop unknown Kadath; the final journey being either to the marvellous sunset city itself, in case the gods proved favourable, or back to the earthward Gate of Deeper Slumber in the Enchanted Wood, in case his prayers were fruitless.

Whilst Carter was speaking, all the ghouls listened with great attention, and as the moments advanced the sky became black

with clouds of those night-gaunts for which messengers had been sent. The winged horrors settled in a semicircle around the ghoulish army, waiting respectfully as the doglike chieftains considered the wish of the earthly traveller. The ghou that was Pickman glibbered gravely with its fellows, and in the end Carter was offered far more than he had at most expected. As he had aided the ghouls in their conquest of the moonbeasts, so would they aid him in his daring voyage to realms whence none had ever returned; lending him not merely a few of their allied night-gaunts, but their entire army as then encamped, veteran fighting ghouls and newly assembled night-gaunts alike, save only a small garrison for the captured black galley and such spoils as had come from the jagged rock in the sea. They would set out through the air whenever he might wish, and once arrived on Kadath a suitable train of ghouls would attend him in state as he placed his petition before earth's gods in their onyx castle.

Moved by a gratitude and satisfaction beyond words, Carter made plans with the ghoulish leaders for his audacious voyage. The army would fly high, they decided, over hideous Leng with its nameless monastery and wicked stone villages, stopping only at the vast grey peaks to confer with the Shantak-frightening night-gaunts whose burrows honeycombed their summits. They would then, according to what advice they might receive from those denizens, choose their final course; approaching unknown Kadath either through the desert of carven mountains north of Inquanok, or through the more northerly reaches of repulsive Leng itself. Doglike and soulless as they are, the ghouls and night-gaunts had no dread of what those untrodden deserts might reveal; nor did they feel any deterring awe at the thought of Kadath towering lone with its onyx castle of mystery.

About midday the ghouls and night-gaunts prepared for flight each ghou selecting a suitable pair of horned steeds to bear him. Carter was placed well up toward the head of the column beside Pickman, and in front of the whole a double line of riderless night-gaunts was provided as a vanguard. At a brisk meep from Pickman the whole shocking army rose in a nightmare cloud above the broken columns and crumbling sphinxes of primordial Sarkomand; higher and higher, till even the great basalt cliff behind the town was cleared, and the cold, sterile table-land of Leng's outskirts laid open to sight. Still higher flew the black host, till even this table-land grew small beneath them, and as

they worked northward over that wind-swept plateau of horror Carter saw once again with a shudder the circle of crude monoliths and the squat windowless building which he knew held that frightful silken-masked blasphemy from whose clutches he had so narrowly escaped. This time no descent was made as the army swept batlike over the sterile landscape, passing the feeble fires of the unwholesome stone villages at a great altitude, and pausing not at all to mark the morbid twistings of the hooved, horned almost-humans that dance and pipe eternally therein. Once they saw a Shantak-bird flying low over the plain, but when it saw them it screamed noxiously and flapped off to the north in grotesque panic.

At dusk they reached the jagged grey peaks that form the barrier of Inquanok, and hovered about these strange caves near the summits which Carter recalled as so frightful to the Shantaks. At the insistent meeping of the ghoulish leaders there issued forth from each lofty burrow a stream of horned black flyers with which the ghouls and night-gaunts of the party conferred at length by means of ugly gestures. It soon became clear that the best course would be that over the cold waste north of Inquanok, for Leng's northward reaches are full of unseen pitfalls that even the night-gaunts dislike, abysmal influences centering in certain white hemispherical buildings on curious knolls, which common folklore associates unpleasantly with the Other Gods and their crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep.

Of Kadath the flutterers of the peak knew almost nothing, save that there must be some mighty marvel toward the north, over which the Shantaks and the carven mountains stand guard. They hinted at rumoured abnormalities of proportion in those trackless leagues beyond, and recalled vague whispers of a realm where night broods eternally; but of definite data they had nothing to give. So Carter and his party thanked them kindly; and, crossing the topmost granite pinnacles to the skies of Inquanok, dropped below the level of the phosphorescent night clouds and beheld in the distance those terrible squatting gargoyles that were mountains till some titan hand carved fright into their virgin rock.

There they squatted in a hellish half-circle, their legs on the desert sand and their mitres piercing the luminous clouds: sinister, wolf-like, and double-headed, with faces of fury and right hands raised, dully and malignly watching the rim of man's world and

guarding with horror the reaches of a cold northern world that is not man's. From their hideous laps rose evil Shantaks of elephantine bulk, but these all fled with insane titters as the vanguard of night-gaunts was sighted in the misty sky. Northward above those gargoyle mountains the army flew, and over leagues of dim desert where never a landmark rose. Less and less luminous grew the clouds, till at length Carter could see only blackness around him; but never did the winged steeds falter, bred as they were in earth's blackest crypts, and seeing not with any eyes, but with the whole dank surface of their slippery forms. On and on they flew, past winds of dubious scent and sounds of dubious import; ever in thickest darkness, and covering such prodigious spaces that Carter wondered whether or not they could still be within earth's dreamland.

Then suddenly the clouds thinned and the stars shone spectrally above. All below was still black, but those pallid beacons in the sky seemed alive with a meaning and directiveness they had never possessed elsewhere. It was not that the figures of the constellations were different, but that the same familiar shapes now revealed a significance they had formerly failed to make plain. Everything focussed toward the north; every curve and asterism of the glittering sky became part of a vast design whose function was to hurry first the eye and then the whole observer onward to some secret and terrible goal of convergence beyond the frozen waste that stretched endlessly ahead. Carter looked toward the east where the great ridge of barrier peaks had towered along all the length of Inquanok, and saw against the stars a jagged silhouette which told of its continued presence. It was more broken now, with yawning clefts and fantastically erratic pinnacles; and Carter studied closely the suggestive turnings and inclinations of that grotesque outline, which seemed to share with the stars some subtle northward urge.

They were flying past at a tremendous speed, so that the watcher had to strain hard to catch details; when all at once he beheld just above the line of the topmost peaks a dark and moving object against the stars, whose course exactly paralleled that of his own bizarre party. The ghouls had likewise glimpsed it, for he heard their low glibbering all about him, and for a moment he fancied the object was a gigantic Shantak, of a size vastly greater than that of the average specimen. Soon, however, he saw that this theory would not hold; for the shape of the thing

above the mountains was not that of any hippocephalic bird. Its outline against the stars, necessarily vague as it was, resembled rather some huge mitred head, or pair of heads infinitely magnified; and its rapid bobbing flight through the sky seemed most peculiarly a wingless one. Carter could not tell which side of the mountains it was on, but soon perceived that it had parts below the parts he had first seen, since it blotted out all the stars in places where the ridge was deeply cleft.

Then came a wide gap in the range, where the hideous reaches of transmontane Leng were joined to the cold waste on this side by a low pass through which the stars shone wanly. Carter watched this gap with intense care, knowing that he might see outlined against the sky beyond it the lower parts of the vast thing that flew undulantly above the pinnacles. The object had now floated ahead a trifle, and every eye of the party was fixed on the rift where it would presently appear in full-length silhouette. Gradually the huge thing above the peaks neared the gap, slightly slackening its speed as if conscious of having outdistanced the ghoulish army. For another minute suspense was keen, and then the brief instant of full silhouette and revelation came; bringing to the lips of the ghouls an awed and half-choked meep of cosmic fear, and to the soul of the traveller a chill that has never wholly left it. For the mammoth bobbing shape that overtopped the ridge was only a head—a mitred double head—and below it in terrible vastness loomed the frightful swollen body that bore it; the mountain-high monstrosity that walked in stealth and silence, the hyaena-like distortion of a giant anthropoid shape that trotted blackly against the sky, its repulsive pair of cone-capped heads reaching half way to the zenith.

Carter did not lose consciousness or even scream aloud, for he was an old dreamer; but he looked behind him in horror and shuddered when he saw that there were other monstrous heads silhouetted above the level of the peaks, bobbing along stealthily after the first ones. And straight in the rear were three of the mighty mountain shapes seen full against the southern stars, tiptoeing wolf-like and lumbering, their tall mitres nodding thousands of feet in the air. The carven mountains, then had not stayed squatting in that rigid semicircle north of Inquanok with right hands uplifted. They had duties to perform, and were not remiss. But it was horrible, that they never spoke, and never even made a sound in walking.

Meanwhile the ghoul that was Pickman had glibbered an order to the night-gaunts, and the whole army soared higher into the air. Up toward the stars the grotesque column shot, till nothing stood out any longer against the sky; neither the grey granite ridge that was still nor the carven mitred mountains that walked. All was blackness beneath as the fluttering legion surged northward amidst rushing winds and invisible laughter in the aether, and never a Shantak or less mentionable entity rose from the haunting wastes to pursue them. The farther they went, the faster they flew, till soon their dizzying speed seemed to pass that of a rifle ball and approach that of a planet in its orbit. Carter wondered how with such speed the earth could still stretch beneath them, but knew that in the land of dream, dimensions have strange properties. That they were in a realm of eternal night he felt certain, and he fancied that the constellations overhead had subtly emphasised their northward focus; gathering themselves up as it were to cast the flying army into the void of the boreal pole, as the folds of a bag are gathered up to cast out the last bits of substance therein.

Then he noticed with terror that the wings of the night-gaunts were not flapping any more. The horned and faceless steeds had folded their membranous appendages, and were resting quite passive in the chaos of wind that whirled and chuckled as it bore them on. A force not of earth had seized on the army, and ghouls and night-gaunts alike were powerless before a current which pulled madly and relentlessly into the north whence no mortal had ever returned. At length a lone pallid light was seen on the skyline ahead, thereafter rising steadily as they approached, and having beneath it a black mass that blotted out the stars. Carter saw that it must be some beacon on a mountain, for only a mountain could rise so vast as seen from so prodigious a height in the air.

Higher and higher rose the light and the blackness beneath it, till half the northern sky was obscured by the rugged conical mass. Lofty as the army was, that pale and sinister beacon rose above it, towering monstrous over all peaks and concernments of earth, and tasting the atomless aether where the cryptical moon and the mad planets reel. No mountain known of man was that which loomed before them. The high clouds far below were but a fringe for its foothills. The groping dizziness of topmost air was but a girdle for its loins. Scornful and spectral climbed

that bridge betwixt earth and heaven, black in eternal night, and crowned with a pshent of unknown stars whose awful and significant outline grew every moment clearer. Ghouls meeped in wonder as they saw it, and Carter shivered in fear lest all the hurtling army be dashed to pieces on the unyielding onyx of that cyclopean cliff.

Higher and higher rose the light, till it mingled with the loftiest orbs of the zenith and winked down at the flyers with lurid mockery. All the north beneath it was blackness now, dread, stony blackness from infinite depths to infinite heights, with only that pale winking beacon perched unreachably at the top of all vision. Carter studied the light more closely, and saw at last what lines its inky background made against the stars. There were towers on that titan mountaintop; horrible domed towers in noxious and incalculable tiers and clusters beyond any dreamable workmanship of man; battlements and terraces of wonder and menace, all limned tiny and black and distant against the starry pshent that glowed malevolently at the uppermost rim of sight. Capping that most measureless of mountains was a castle beyond all mortal thought, and in it glowed the daemon-light. Then Randolph Carter knew that his quest was done, and that he saw above him the goal of all forbidden steps and audacious visions: the fabulous, the incredible home of the Great Ones atop unknown Kadath.

Even as he realized this thing, Carter noticed a change in the course of the helplessly wind-sucked party. They were rising abruptly now, and it was plain that the focus of their flight was the onyx castle where the pale light shone. So close was the great black mountain that its sides sped by them dizzily as they shot upward, and in the darkness they could discern nothing upon it. Vaster and vaster loomed the tenebrous towers of the nighted castle above, and Carter could see that it was well-nigh blasphemous in its immensity. Well might its stones have been quarried by nameless workmen in that horrible gulf rent out of the rock in the hill pass north of Inquanok, for such was its size that a man on its threshold stood even as air out on the steps of earth's loftiest fortress. The pshent of unknown stars above the myriad domed turrets glowed with a sallow, sickly flare, so that a kind of twilight hung about the murky walls of slippery onyx. The pallid beacon was now seen to be a single shining window high up in one of the loftiest towers, and as the helpless

army neared the top of the mountain Carter thought he detected unpleasant shadows flitting across the feebly luminous expanse. It was a strangely arched window, of a design wholly alien to earth.

The solid rock now gave place to the giant foundations of the monstrous castle, and it seemed that the speed of the party was somewhat abated. Vast walls shot up, and there was a glimpse of a great gate through which the voyagers were swept. All was night in the titan courtyard, and then came the deeper blackness of inmost things as a huge arched portal engulfed the column. Vortices of cold wind surged dankly through sightless labyrinths of onyx, and Carter could never tell what cyclopean stairs and corridors lay silent along the route of his endless aerial twisting. Always upward led the terrible plunge in darkness, and never a sound, touch or glimpse broke the dense pall of mystery. Large as the army of ghouls and night-gaunts was, it was lost in the prodigious voids of that more than earthly castle. And when at last there suddenly dawned around him the lurid light of that single tower room whose lofty window had served as a beacon, it took Carter long to discern the far walls and high, distant ceiling, and to realize that he was indeed not again in the boundless air outside.

Randolph Carter had hoped to come into the throne-room of the Great Ones with poise and dignity, flanked and followed by impressive lines of ghouls in ceremonial order, and offering his prayer as a free and potent master among dreamers. He had known that the Great Ones themselves are not beyond a mortal's power to cope with, and had trusted to luck that the Other Gods and their crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep, would not happen to come to their aid at the crucial moment, as they had so often done before when men sought out earth's gods in their home or on their mountains. And with this hideous escort he had half hoped to defy even the Other Gods if need were, knowing as he did that ghouls have no masters, and that night-gaunts own not Nyarlathotep but only archaick Nodens for their lord. But now he saw that supernal Kadath in its cold waste is indeed girt with dark wonders and nameless sentinels, and that the Other Gods are of a surety vigilant in guarding the mild, feeble gods of earth. Void as they are of lordship over ghouls and night-gaunts, the mindless, shapeless blasphemies of outer space can yet control them when they must; so that it was not in state

as a free and potent master of dreamers that Randolph Carter came into the Great Ones' throne-room with his ghouls. Swept and herded by nightmare tempests from the stars, and dogged by unseen horrors of the northern waste, all that army floated captive and helpless in the lurid light, dropping numbly to the onyx floor when by some voiceless order the winds of fright dissolved.

Before no golden dais had Randolph Carter come, nor was there any august circle of crowned and haloed beings with narrow eyes, long-lobed ears, thin nose, and pointed chin whose kinship to the carven face no Ngranek might stamp them as those to whom a dreamer might pray. Save for the one tower room the onyx castle atop Kadath was dark, and the masters were not there. Carter had come to unknown Kadath in the cold waste, but he had not found the gods. Yet still the lurid light glowed in that one tower room whose size was so little less than that of all outdoors, and whose distant walls and roof were so nearly lost to sight in thin, curling wisps. Earth's gods were not there, it was true, but of subtler and less visible presences there could be no lack. Where the mild gods are absent, the Other Gods are not unrepresented; and certainly, the onyx castle of castles was far from tenantless. In what outrageous form or forms terror would next reveal itself, Carter could by no means imagine. He felt that his visit had been expected, and wondered how close a watch had all along been kept upon him by the crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep. It is Nyarlathotep, horror of infinite shapes and dread soul and messenger of the Other Gods, that the fungous moonbeasts serve; and Carter thought of the black galley that had vanished when the tide of battle turned against the toadlike abnormalities on the jagged rock in the sea.

Reflecting upon these things, he was staggering to his feet in the midst of his nightmare company, when there rang without warning through that pale-litten and limitless chamber the hideous blast of a daemon trumpet. Three times pealed that frightful brazen scream and, when the echoes of the third blast had died chucklingly away, Randolph Carter saw that he was alone. Whither, why and how the ghouls and night-gaunts had been snatched from sight was not for him to divine. He knew only that he was suddenly alone, and that whatever unseen powers lurked mockingly around him were no powers of earth's friendly dreamland. Presently from the chamber's uttermost reaches

a new sound came. This, too, was a rhythmic trumpeting; but of a kind far removed from the three raucous blasts which had dissolved his goodly cohorts. In this low fanfare echoed all the wonder and melody of ethereal dream, exotic vistas of unimagined loveliness floating from each strange chord and subtly alien cadence. Odours of incense came to match the golden notes; and overhead a great light dawned, its colour changing in cycles unknown to earth's spectrum, and following the song of the trumpets in weird symphonic harmonies. Torches flared in the distance, and the beat of drum throbbed nearer amidst waves of tense expectancy.

Out of the thinning mists and the cloud of strange incenses filed twin columns of giant black slaves with loin-cloths of iridescent silk. Upon their heads were strapped vast helmet-like torches of glittering metal, from which the fragrance of obscure balsams spread in fumous spirals. In their right hands were crystal wands whose tips were carved into leering chimaeras, while their left hands grasped long thin silver trumpets which they blew in turn. Armlets and anklets of gold they had, and between each pair of anklets stretched a golden chain that held its wearer to a sober gait. That they were true black men of earth's dreamland was at once apparent, but it seemed less likely that their rites and costumes were wholly things of our earth. Ten feet from Carter the column stopped, and as they did so each trumpet flew abruptly to its bearer's thin lips. Wild and ecstatic was the blast that followed, and wilder still the cry that chorused just after from dark throats somehow made shrill by strange artifice.

Then down the wide lane betwixt the two columns a lone figure strode; a tall, slim figure with the young face of an antique Pharaoh, gay with prismatic robes and crowned with a golden pschent that glowed with inherent light. Close up to Carter strode that regal figure; whose proud carriage and smart features had in them the fascination of a dark god or fallen archangel, and around whose eyes there lurked the languid sparkle of capricious humour. It spoke, and in its mellow tones there rippled the wild music of Lethean streams.

"Randolph Carter," said the voice, "you have come to the Great Ones whom it is unlawful for men to see. Watchers have spoken of this thing, and the Other Gods have grunted as they rolled and tumbled mindlessly to the sound of thin flutes in the

black ultimate void where broods the daemon-sultan whose name no lips dare speak aloud.

"When Barzai the Wise climbed Hatheg-Kla to see the Great Ones dance and howl above the clouds in the moonlight he never returned. The Other Gods were there, and they did what was expected. Zenig of Aphorat sought to reach unknown Kadath in the cold waste, and his skull is now set in a ring on the little finger of one whom I need not name.

"But you, Randolph Carter, have braved all things of earth's dreamland, and burn still with the flame of quest. You came not as one curious, but as one seeking his due, nor have you failed ever in reverence toward the mild gods of earth. Yet have these gods kept you from the marvellous sunset city of your dreams, and wholly through their own small covetousness; for verily, they craved the weird loveliness of that which your fancy had fashioned, and vowed that henceforward no other spot should be their abode.

"They are gone from their castle on unknown Kadath to dwell in your marvellous city. All through its palaces of veined marble they revel by day, and when the sun sets they go out in the perfumed gardens and watch the golden glory on temples and colonades, arched bridges and silver-basined fountains, and wide streets with blossom-laden urns and ivory statues in gleaming rows. And when night comes, they climb tall terraces in the dew, and sit on carved benches of porphyry scanning the stars, or lean over pale balustrades to gaze at the town's steep northward slopes, where one by one of the little windows in old peaked gables shine softly out with the calm yellow light of homely candles.

"The gods love your marvellous city, and walk no more in the ways of the gods. They have forgotten the high places of earth, and the mountains that knew their youth. The earth has no longer any gods that are gods, and only the Other Gods from outer space hold sway on unremembered Kadath. Far away in a valley of your own childhood, Randolph Carter, play the heedless Great Ones. You have dreamed too well, O wise arch-dreamer, for you have drawn dream's gods away from the world of all men's visions to that which is wholly yours; having builded out of your boyhood's small fancies a city more lovely than all the phantoms that have gone before.

"It is not well that earth's gods leave their thrones for the spider to spin on, and their realm for the Others to sway in the dark manner of Others. Fain would the powers from outside bring chaos and horror to you, Randolph Carter, who are the cause of their upsetting, but that they know it is by you alone that the gods may be sent back to their world. In that half-waking dreamland which is yours, no power of uttermost night may pursue; and only you can send the selfish Great Ones gently out of your marvellous sunset city, back through the northern twilight to their wonted place atop unknown Kadath in the cold waste.

"So, Randolph Carter, in the name of the Other Gods I spare you and charge you to serve my will. I charge you to seek that sunset city which is yours, and to send thence the drowsy truant gods for whom the dream world waits. Not hard to find is that roseal fever of the gods, that fanfare of supernal trumpets and clash of immortal cymbals, that mystery whose place and meaning have haunted you through the halls of waking and the gulfs of dreaming, and tormented you with hints of vanished memory and the pain of lost things awesome and momentous. Not hard to find is the symbol and relic of your days of wonder, for truly is it but the stable and eternal gem wherein all wonder sparkles crystallised to light your evening path. Behold! It is not over unknown seas but back over well-known years that your quest must go; back to the bright strange things of infancy and the quick sun-drenched glimpses of magic that old scenes brought to wide young eyes.

"For know you, that your gold and marble city of wonder is only the sum of what you have seen and loved in youth. It is the glory of Boston's hillside roofs and western windows aflame with sunset; of the flower-fragrant Common and the great dome on hill and the tangle of gables and chimneys in the violet valley where the many-bridged Charles flows drowsily. These things you saw, Randolph Carter, when your nurse first wheeled you out in the springtime, and they will be the last things you will ever see with eyes and memory and of love. And there is antique Salem with its brooding years, and spectral Marblehead scaling its rocky precipices into past centuries, and the glory of Salem's towers and spires seen afar from Marblehead's pastures across the harbour against the setting sun.

"There is Providence quaint and lordly on its seven hills over

the blue harbour, with terraces of green leading up to steeples and citadels of living antiquity, and Newport climbing wraithlike from its dreaming breakwater. Arkham is there, with its moss-grown gambrel roofs and the rocky rolling meadows behind it; and antediluvian Kingsport hoary with stacked chimneys and deserted quays and overhanging gables, and the marvel of high cliffs and the milky-misted ocean with tolling buoys beyond.

"Cool vales in Concord, cobbled lanes in Portsmouth, twilight bends of rustic New Hampshire roads where giant elms half hide white farmhouse walls and creaking well-sweeps. Gloucester's salt wharves and Truro's windy willows. Vistas of distant steepled town and hills beyond hills along the North Shore, hushed stony slopes and low ivied cottages in the lee of huge boulders in Rhode Island's back country. Scent of the sea and fragrance of the fields; spell of the dark woods and joy of the orchards and gardens at dawn. These, Randolph Carter, are your city; for they are yourself. New England bore you, and into your soul she poured a liquid loveliness which cannot die. This loveliness, moulded, crystallised, and polished by years of memory and dreaming, is your terraced wonder of elusive sunsets; and to find that marble parapet with curious urns and carven rails, and descend at last these endless balustraded steps to the city of broad squares and prismatic fountains, you need only to turn back to the thoughts and visions of your wistful boyhood.

"Look! through that window shine the stars of eternal night. Even now they are shining above the scenes you have known and cherished, drinking of their charm that they may shine more lovely over the gardens of dream. There is Antares—he is winking at this moment over the roofs of Tremont Street, and you could see him from your window on Beacon Hill. Out beyond those stars yawn the gulfs from whence my mindless masters have sent me. Some day you too may traverse them, but if you are wise you will beware such folly; for of those mortals who have been and returned, only one preserves a mind unshattered by the pounding, clawing horrors of the void. Terrors and blasphemies gnaw at one another for space, and there is more evil in the lesser ones than in the greater; even as you know from the deeds of those who sought to deliver you into my hands, whilst I myself harboured no wish to shatter you, and would indeed have helped you hither long ago had I not been elsewhere busy, and certain that you would find the way. Shun

then, the outer hells, and stick to the calm, lovely things of your youth. Seek out your marvellous city and drive thence the recreant Great Ones, sending them back gently to those scenes which are of their own youth, and which wait uneasy for their return.

"Easier even than the way of dim memory is the way I will prepare for you. See! There comes hither a monstrous Shantak, led by a slave who for your peace of mind had best keep invisible. Mount and be ready—there! Yogash the black will help you on the scaly horror. Steer for that brightest star just south of the zenith—it is Vega, and in two hours will be just above the terrace of your sunset city. Steer for it only till you hear a far-off singing in the high aether. Higher than that lurks madness, so rein your Shantak when the first note lures. Look then back to earth, and you will see shining the deathless altar-flame of Ired-Naa from the sacred roof of a temple. That temple is in your desiderate sunset city, so steer for it before you heed the singing and are lost.

"When you draw nigh the city steer for the same high parapet whence of old you scanned the outspread glory, prodding the Shantak till he cry aloud. That cry the Great Ones will hear and know as they sit on their perfumed terraces, and there will come upon them such a homesickness that all of your city's wonders will not console them for the absence of Kadath's grim castle and the pshent of eternal stars that crowns it.

"Then must you land amongst them with the Shantak, and let them see and touch that noisome and hippocephalic bird; meanwhile discoursing to them of unknown Kadath, which you will so lately have left, and telling them how its boundless halls are lovely and unlighted, where of old they used to leap and revel in supernal radiance. And the Shantak will talk to them in the manner of Shantaks, but it will have no powers of persuasion beyond the recalling of elder days.

"Over and over must you speak to the wandering Great Ones of their home and youth, till at last they will weep and ask to be shewn the returning path they have forgotten. Thereat can you loose the waiting Shantak, sending him skyward with the homing cry of his kind; hearing which the Great Ones will prance and jump with antique mirth, and forthwith stride after the loathly bird in the fashion of gods, through the deep gulfs of heaven to Kadath's familiar towers and domes.

"Then will the marvellous sunset city be yours to cherish and inhabit for ever, and once more will earth's gods rule the dreams of men from their accustomed seat. Go now—the casement is open and the stars await outside. Already your Shantak wheezes and titters with impatience. Steer for Vega through the night, but turn when the singing sounds. Forget not this warning, lest horrors unthinkable suck you into the gulf of shrieking and ululant madness. Remember the Other Gods; they are great and mindless and terrible, and lurk in the outer voids. They are good gods to shun.

"*Heil! Aa-shanta 'nygh!* You are off! Send back earth's gods to their haunts on unknown Kadath, and pray to all space that you may never meet me in my thousand other forms. Farewell, Randolph Carter, and beware; *for I am Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos!*"

And Randolph Carter, gasping and dizzy on his hideous Shantak, shot screaming into space toward the cold blue glare of boreal Vega; looking but once behind him at the clustered and chaotic turrets of the onyx nightmare wherein still glowed the lone lurid light of that window above the air and the clouds of earth's dreamland. Great polypous horrors slid darkly past, and unseen bat wings beat multitudinous around him, but still he clung to the unwholesome mane of that loathly and hippocephalic scaled bird. The stars danced mockingly, almost shifting now and then to form pale signs of doom that one might wonder one had not seen and feared before; and ever the winds of nether howled of vague blackness and loneliness beyond the cosmos.

Then through the glittering vault ahead there fell a hush of portent, and all the winds and horrors slunk away as night things slink away before the dawn. Trembling in waves that golden wisps of nebula made weirdly visible, there rose a timid hint of far-off melody, droning in faint chords that our own universe of stars knows not. And as that music grew, the Shantak raised its ears and plunged ahead, and Carter likewise bent to catch each lovely strain. It was a song, but not the song of any voice. Night and the spheres sang it, and it was old when space and Nyarlathotep and the Other Gods were born.

Faster flew the Shantak, and lower bent the rider, drunk with the marvel of strange gulfs, and whirling in the crystal coils of outer magic. Then came too late the warning of the evil one, the sardonic caution of the daemon legate who had bidden the seeker

beware the madness of that song. Only to taunt had Nyarlathotep marked out the way to safety and the marvellous sunset city; only to mock had that black messenger revealed the secret of these truant gods whose steps he could so easily lead back at will. For madness and the void's wild vengeance are Nyarlathotep's only gifts to the presumptuous; and frantick though the rider strove to turn his disgusting steed, that leering, tittering Shantak coursed on impetuous and relentless, flapping its great slippery wings in malignant joy, and headed for those unhallowed pits whither no dreams reach; that last amorphous blight of nethermost confusion where bubbles and blasphemies at infinity's centre the mindless daemon-sultan Azathoth, whose name no lips dare speak aloud.

Unswerving and obedient to the foul legate's orders, that hellish bird plunged onward through shoals of shapeless lurkers and caperers in darkness, and vacuous herds of drifting entities that pawed and groped and groped and pawed, the nameless larvae of the Other Gods, that are like them blind and without mind, and possessed of singular hungers and thirsts.

Onward unswerving and relentless, and tittering hilariously to watch the chuckling and hysterics into which the risen song of night and the spheres had turned, that eldritch scaly monster bore its helpless rider; hurtling and shooting, cleaving the uttermost rim and spanning the outermost abysses; leaving behind the stars and the realms of matter, and darting meteor-like through stark formlessness toward those inconceivable, unlighted chambers beyond time wherein Azathoth gnaws shapeless and ravenous amidst the muffled, maddening beat of vile drums and the thin, monotonous whine of accursed flutes.

Onward — onward — through the screaming, crackling, and blackly populous gulfs—and then from some dim blessed distance there came an image and a thought to Randolph Carter the doomed. Too well had Nyarlathotep planned his mocking and his tantalising, for he had brought up that which no gusts of icy terror could quite efface. Home—New England—Beacon Hill—the waking world.

"For know you, that your gold and marble city of wonder is only the sum of what you have seen and loved in youth . . . the glory of Boston's hillside roofs and western windows aflame with sunset; of the flower-fragrant Common and the great dome on the hill and the tangle of gables and chimneys in the violet

valley where the many-bridged Charles flows drowsily . . . this loveliness, moulded, crystallised, and polished by years of memory and dreaming, is your terraced wonder of elusive sunsets; and to find that marble parapet with curious urns and carven rails, and descend at last those endless balustraded steps to the city of broad squares and prismatic fountains, you need only to turn back to the thoughts and visions of your wistful boyhood."

Onward—onward—dizzily onward to ultimate doom through the blackness where sightless feelers pawed and slimy snouts jostled and nameless things tittered and tittered and tittered. But the image and the thought had come, and Randolph Carter knew clearly that he was dreaming and only dreaming, and that somewhere in the background the world of waking and the city of his infancy still lay. Words came again—"You need only turn back to the thoughts and visions of your wistful boyhood." Turn—turn—blackness on every side, but Randolph Carter could turn.

Thick though the rushing nightmare that clutched his senses, Randolph Carter could turn and move. He could move, and if he chose he could leap off the evil Shantak that bore him hurtlingly doomward at the orders of Nyarlathotep. He could leap off and dare those depths of night that yawned interminably down, those depths of fear whose terrors yet could not exceed the nameless doom that lurked waiting at chaos' core. He could turn and move and leap—he could—he would—he would—.

Off that vast hippocephalic abomination leaped the doomed and desperate dreamer, and down through endless voids of sentient blackness he fell. Aeons reeled, universes died and were born again, stars became nebulae and nebulae became stars, and still Randolph Carter fell through those endless voids of sentient blackness.

Then in the slow creeping course of eternity the utmost cycle of the *comos* churned itself into another futile completion, and all things became again as they were unreckoned *kalpas* before. Matter and light were born anew as space once had known them; and comets, suns and worlds sprang flaming into life, though nothing survived to tell that they had been and gone, been and gone, always and always, back to no first beginning.

And there was a firmament again, and a wind, and a glare of purple light in the eyes of the falling dreamer. There were gods and presences and wills; beauty and evil, and the shrieking of

noxious night robbed of its prey. For through the unknown ultimate cycle had lived a thought and a vision of a dreamer's boyhood, and now there were re-made a waking world and an old cherished city to body and to justify these things. Out of the void, S'ngac, the violet gas, had pointed the way, and archaic Nodens was bellowing his guidance from unhinted deeps.

Stars swelled to dawn, and dawns burst into fountains of gold, carmine, and purple, and still the dreamer fell. Cries rent the aether as ribbons of light beat back the fiends from outside. And hoary Nodens raised a howl of triumph when Nyarlathotep, close on his quarry, stopped baffled by a glare that seared his formless hunting-horrors to grey dust. Randolph Carter had indeed descended at last the wide marmoreal flights to his marvellous city, for he was come again to the fair New England world that had wrought him.

So the organ chords of morning's myriad whistles, and dawn's blaze thrown dazzling through purple panes by the great gold dome of the State House on the hill, Randolph Carter leaped shoutingly awake within his Boston room. Birds sang in hidden gardens and the perfume of trellised vines came wistful from arbours his grandfather had reared. Beauty and light glowed from classic mantel and carven cornice and walls grotesquely figured, while a sleek black cat rose yawning from hearthside sleep that his master's start and shriek had disturbed. And vast infinities away, past the Gate of Deeper Slumber and the enchanted wood and the garden lands and the Cerenarian Sea and the twilight reaches of Inquanok, the crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep, strode brooding into the onyx castle atop unknown Kadath in the cold waste, and taunted insolently the mild gods of earth whom he had snatched abruptly from their scented revels in the marvellous sunset city.

CHANGE OF HEART

by ROBERT BLOCH

It had been the sun, the moon, the stars to me—a whirling planet of silver, held to its orbit by a glittering chain. Uncle Hansi would twirl it before my eyes on those long, faraway Sunday afternoons. Sometimes he let me press the icy surface against my ear, and then I heard from deep within it the music of the spheres.

Now it was only a battered old watch, a keepsake inheritance. The once gleaming case was worn and dented, and a deep scratch crossed the finely etched initials below the stem.

I took it to a jeweller's on the Avenue, for an estimate, and the clerk was frigidly polite. "We've hardly the facilities to handle such repair work here. Perhaps some small shop, a watchmaker of the old school—"

He laid it carelessly on the counter, for he did not know that this was a dying planet, a waning world, a star that flamed in first magnitude in the bygone eons of my childhood.

So I put the world in my pocket and went away from there. I walked home through the Village and came, eventually, to the establishment of Ulrich Klemm.

The basement window was grimy with the dust of years, and the gold lettering had flecked and moted, but the name caught my eye. "ULRICH KLEMM, WATCHMAKER."

I descended five steps, turned the doorknob, and walked into a seething symphony of sound. Whispers, murmurs, frantic titterings. Deep buzzings and shrill cadences. Muted, measured, mechanical rhythms, set in eternal order—the testament of Time.

Against shadowed walls the faces loomed and leered. They were big, they were small, they were round or oval or broad; high and low they hung, these clock-faces in the shop of Ulrich Klemm, ticking and staring at me in darkness.

The white head of the watchmaker was haloed in the light of his workbench. He turned and rose, then shuffled over to the counter, his padding feet weaving in counterpoint to the rhythms of the clockwork on the walls.

"There iss something?" he asked. I stared into his face—the face of a grandfather's clock; weathered, patient, enduring, inscrutable.

"I want you to have a look at this," I said. "My uncle Hansi willed it to me, but the regular jewellers don't seem to know how to put it in working order."

As I put Uncle Hansi's watch on the counter, the face of the grandfather's clock leaned forward. All of the faces on the wall gazed and gaped while I explained.

Ulrich Klemm nodded. His gnarled hands (do all grandfather's clocks have gnarled hands? I wondered) carried the battered old timepiece over to the light above the workbench.

I watched the hands. They did not tremble. The fingers suddenly became instruments. They opened, revealed, pried, probed, delicately dissected.

"Yess. I can repair this, I think." He spoke to me, to all the faces on the wall.

"It will not be easy. These parts—they are no longer made. I shall have to fashion them especially. But it iss a fine watch, yess, and worth the effort."

I opened my mouth, but did not speak. The faces on the wall spoke for me.

For suddenly the sound surged to a crescendo, sharp and shrill. The faces laughed and gurgled and shrieked; a hundred voices, accents, tongues and intonations met and mingled. Six times the voices rose and fell, proclaiming—

"It's six o'clock, Grandfather."

No, it wasn't my imagination. The voice said that. Not the mechanical voice, but the other one. The one that came from the long, slim, incredibly white throat of the girl who emerged from the rear of the shop.

"Yess, Lisa?" The old man cocked his head.

"Dinner is ready. Oh, excuse me—I thought you were alone."

I stared at golden hair and silver flesh. Lisa. The granddaughter. The clocks ticked on, and something leapt in rhythm deep in my chest.

She smiled. I smiled. Ulrich introduced her. And I became crafty, persuasive. I leaned over the counter and artfully led the conversation along, encouraging him to talk of the marvels of clockwork, of old days in Switzerland when Ulrich Klemm was a horologist of renown.

It wasn't difficult. He extended an invitation to share the meal, and soon I was in one of the rooms behind the shop, listening to further reminiscences.

He spoke of the golden days of clockwork, of automata—mechanical chessplayers, birds that sang and flew, soldiers walking and sounding trumpets, angels in belfries chorusing the coming of day and brandishing swords against Evil.

Ulrich Klemm showed me the picture on his wall—the picture he had salvaged ten years ago when he and Lisa fled from Europe to the refuge of this tiny shop in the Village. The picture was a landscape, with railroad tracks running through a mountain pass. He wound a spring at the side of the frame and the train came out and raced through a tunnel, climbed the grade and disappeared again. It was a marvelous picture, and I told him so.

But no picture, however animated, could satisfy me as did the sight of Lisa. And while my tongue responded to the old man, my eyes answered the girl.

We didn't say much to one another. She cut her finger while serving the meat, and I bandaged it as the blood flowed. We spoke of the weather, of trivial things. But when I departed I had wrung an invitation to come again from Ulrich Klemm. Lisa smiled and nodded as I left, and she smiled and nodded again that night in my dreams.

So it was that I came often to the little shop, even after my watch had been repaired and restored to me. Ulrich Klemm enjoyed an audience—he dreamed and boasted before me for long hours. He told me of the things he had created in the old country; of royal commissions, mechanical marvels, medals and awards.

"There iss nothing I cannot fathom once I turn my hand to it," he often said. "All Nature—just a mechanism. When I wass a young man, my father wished for me to become a surgeon. But the human body iss a poor instrument, full of flaws. A good chronometer, that iss perfection."

I listened and nodded and waited. And in time, I achieved my goal.

Lisa and I became friends, bit by bit. We smiled, we spoke, we went walking together. We went to the park, to the theatre.

It was simple, once the initial barriers were surmounted. For Lisa had no friends, and her schooldays were an alien memory. Ulrich Klemm treasured her with morbid jealousy. She and she alone had never failed him; she responded perfectly to his will. That is what the old man desired—he loved automaton.

But I loved Lisa. Lisa the girl, Lisa the woman. I dreamed of an awakening, an emergence into the world beyond the four

walls of the shop. And in time I spoke to her of what I planned.

"No, Dane," she said. "He will never let me go. He is old and all alone. If we can wait, in a few years—"

"Wake up," I said. "This is New York, the twentieth century. You're of age. And I want you to marry me. Now."

"No," she sighed. "We cannot do this to him." And shook her head, like an automaton.

It was like something out of the Dark Ages. It was a world apart from my office uptown, with its talk of surveys and projects and a branch managership opening for me in Detroit.

I told her about the Detroit assignment. I insisted on speaking now. Lisa wept then, and Lisa pleaded, but in the end I went to the old man and told him.

"I'm going to marry Lisa," I said. "I'm going to take her with me. Now."

"No-no-no-no," ticked the clocks on the wall. "NO—NO—NO," boomed the chimes. And, "You cannot take her!" shouted Ulrich Klemm. "She iss all I have left. No one will ever take her from me. Never."

It was useless to argue. And when I pleaded with Lisa to elope, to run away, she turned the blank perfection of a clock-face towards me and ticked, "No." For Lisa was the old man's masterpiece. He had spent years perfecting her pattern of obedient reaction. I saw that I could never tamper with Ulrich Klemm's delicate adjustments.

So I went away, carrying my silver watch on a chain in my pocket; knowing that I could never find a chain that would link Lisa to me. During the months in Detroit I wrote frequently to the shop, but there was no answer.

I instructed a friend of mine to stop by and deliver messages, but I heard no word. The silver watch in my pocket ticked off the days and the weeks and the months, and finally I returned to New York.

Then I heard that Lisa was dead.

My friend had stopped by and found the shop shuttered and deserted. Going around to the rear, he roused Ulrich Klemm from his vigil. The haggard, sleepless old man said that Lisa had suffered a heart attack. She was dying.

Returning several days later, my friend was unable to rouse anyone. But the wreath on the door of the locked shop told its own grim story.

I thanked my informant, sighed, nodded, and went out into the wintry streets.

It was a bitterly cold day. My breath plumed before me, and I stamped the snow from my shoes as I descended the steps to Ulrich Klemm's door. The glass was frosted like a wedding-cake; I could not see into the shop through the sheet of ice.

My gloved hand tugged the doorknob. The door rattled, but did not open. I knocked. The old man was a little deaf, yet he must hear, he must answer. I knocked again.

Quite suddenly the door opened. I stepped over the threshold, into a vacuum of darkness and silence. No light shone over the workbench, no chimes heralded my entrance. And the clockfaces were invisible, inaudible. The absence of the familiar ticking struck me like a physical blow. It was as though a world had ended.

Everything had stopped. And yet Ulrich Klemm's crazed fanaticism would not permit a stopping, an ending—

"Klemm!" I shouted. "Ulrich Klemm!"

Something stirred in the darkness before me. I heard the tread of light, hesitant footsteps.

"Klemm," I said. "Turn on the lights. It's Dane."

Then I heard the voice, the soft voice murmuring up at me. "You've come back. Oh, I knew you would come back."

"Lisa!"

"Lisa!"

"Yes, dearest. I have been waiting for you here, all alone. So long it has been, I do not know—ever since he died."

"He died? Your grandfather?"

"Did you not know? I was ill, very ill. My heart, the doctor said. It was I who should have died, but Grandfather would not hear of it. He said the doctor was a fool, he would save me himself. And he did. Yes, he did. He nursed and took care of me, even after I was in a coma.

"Then, when at last I was awake again, Grandfather failed. He was so old, you know. Caring for me without thought of himself—going without food or rest—it weakened him. Pneumonia set in and I could do nothing. He died here in the shop. That was a long time ago, it seems."

"How long?"

"I cannot remember. I have not eaten or slept since, but then there is no need, I knew you would come—"

"Let me look at you." I groped through the darkness, found the switch for the lamp over the workbench. The halo of light blossomed against the silent clockfaces on the walls.

Lisa stood there quietly, her face white and waxen, her eyes blank and empty, her body wasted. But she lived. That was enough for me. She lived, and she was free forever of the old man's tyranny.

I wondered what he had done to save her, he who had boasted that nothing would ever take her away from him. Well, he had lavished the last of his skill and genius upon preserving her from death, and it was enough.

I sighed and took Lisa in my arms. Her flesh was cold against mine, and I strove to melt the icy numbness against the heat of my body. I bent my head against her breast, listened to the beating of her heart.

Then I turned and ran screaming from that shop of shadows and silence.

But not before I heard the hellish sound from Lisa's breast—that sound which was not a heartbeat, but a faint, unmistakable *ticking*.

* * * *

ANTERIOR LIFE

Paraphrased from the French of Charles Baudelaire
by CLARK ASHTON SMITH

Long since I lived in lordly porches fronting
With thronged, enormous pillars to the tide,
Where day as in basaltic caverns died
With seaward gleams along the columns shunting.

Rolling from isles of frangipane, the surges
Mingled for me a music turbulent
With broken blue of the mirrored firmament
And sunset fading on the farthest verges.

All splendors of the wandering sky and wave
Illumed me, lying on an amber-scented
Couch in a sorrowful boredom none could know.

On the full bosom of a golden slave
My feet reposed; and sable queens invented
Fantastic love to tease my weary woe.

BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

THE MACHEN COLLECTION

TALES OF HORROR AND THE SUPERNATURAL, by Arthur Machen. With an introduction by Philip Van Doren Stern, and a Note on Machen by Robert Hillyer. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. xxiii, 427 pp., \$3.95.

Among that little group of men who wrote largely or exclusively in the field of the macabre—Algernon Blackwood, M. R. James, H. P. Lovecraft, Lord Dunsany, Walter de la Mare, E. F. Benson, M. P. Shiel, H. Russell Wakefield—Arthur Machen was perhaps the master of terror and psychic horror, just as M. R. James was without peer as a writer of ghost stories, and Lord Dunsany remains unchallenged as the master of fantasy. For if greater stories of terror and psychic horror exist than *The Novel of the Black Seal*, *The White People*, and *The Novel of the White Powder*, I do not know them. Perhaps only Henry James came close to Machen with his short novel, *The Turn of the Screw*, and in another vein, Algernon Blackwood with *The Willows* and *The Wendigo*.

Best known in America for his beautiful autobiographical novel, *The Hill of Dreams*, Arthur Machen, who died last December, was ironically famous throughout the world as the man who "claimed" he had written the legend of the Bowmen of Mons; actually, he had, but so many febrile people "testified" to having "seen" the bowmen, that Machen was for a long time discredited, and even so recently as two years ago a collection of curious "mysteries" calmly offered the legend of the bowmen as a fact, and made no mention of Arthur Machen's originating story, *The Bowmen*, which is included in this collection of his best work in the genre of the weird.

Apart from these titles already listed here, this omnibus contains also two complete novels, *The Terror* and *The Great Return*, as well as *N*, *Children of the Pool*, *The Inmost Light*, *The Great God Pan*, *The Shining Pyramid*, *The Happy Children*, *The Bright Boy*, and *Out of the Earth*. In addition to Dr. Stern's appreciative introduction, Robert Hillyer's account of Machen is also included.

It is a felicitous thing that the best of Arthur Machen's tales should now once more be made available. The searchers for *The Three Imposters* and *The House of Souls* may be satisfied with this volume, for all the best of those two books, in addition to the two short novels, and a selection from other collections by Machen never published in America, can be found in *Tales of Horror and the Supernatural*. It is an anthology which represents at one and the same time the best of Arthur Machen, apart from the longer novels, and the very best tales in the genre of cold horror, as apart from pure grue.

Machen's preoccupation with evil, and, to quote Dr. Stern, with "a transgression of the moral law" which in his work inevitably "calls for dire and dreadful punishment" in which "his characters are haunted by the evil they have done, and are destroyed in terrible ways by their own guilt" is unique. Possibly a taste for Machen's work has to be acquired, as Dr. Stern suggests, but no lover of good writing can turn away from Machen's writing, which is "polished and elaborate," and any literate reader will enjoy his subtle thinking and rich imagery. These factors all together went to make of Machen perhaps the greatest master of horror of our time, and the reader who turns to this new omnibus to meet Machen for the first time has an incredibly rare and rich experience before him.

Tales of Horror and the Supernatural is without question the year's best book in the field; more, it is certainly one of the century's best, and the collector who fails to add it to his shelves, if he does not already own its contents elsewhere, is not worthy of the name.

—AUGUST DERLETH

BOOKS OF MAGICAL LORE

THE MIRROR OF MAGIC: A HISTORY OF MAGIC IN THE WESTERN WORLD, by Kurt Seligmann. Pantheon Books, New York. 504 pp., \$8.50.

WITCHES AND FISHES, by Sir Hesketh Bell. Longmans, Green and Company, New York. 187 pp., \$3.00.

Among devotees of the supernatural in fiction, there is always a generous proportion of people who are interested also in allied subjects—ghostly visitations, occult lore, the magical arts, and

the like. Such readers will find these two books of especial interest, for Mr. Seligmann's is a comprehensive history of magic, within self-imposed limitations, and Sir Hesketh Bell's book contains reminiscences of magical or strange happenings he experienced among the obeah men of the Bahamas.

Mr. Seligmann, best-known as a surrealist artist, planned his book "to present to the general reader a condensed account of the magical ideas, plans and operations of the civilized Western world," with emphasis on just how magical beliefs have influenced the creative imagination. His approach to his subject is made more visual than most because there are no less than 250 illustrations, many of them quaint reproductions of old prints and pictures. In the tradition of Frazer, Thorndike, von Harnack and the like, this book is perhaps the most modern treatment of the subject currently available.

The Mirror of Magic is handsomely printed and lavishly illustrated, and much of the lore it contains still finds adherents in the remote corners of the world. Some of its beliefs are still held to tenaciously by superstitious people here in America, lending Mr. Seligmann's study more than usual sociological value, though it is the author's revelation of how magical arts in belief and practise have influenced creative work that gives this book its particular value. Mr. Seligmann has added notes, a bibliography, and an index, all of which help to make this book indispensable for the devotee of the strange and curious.

Mr. Seligmann sketches the history of magical arts in Mesopotamia, Persia, the Hebraic countries, Egypt, Greece, the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, and the Eighteenth Century, and includes chapters on credos pertaining to alchemy, gnosticism, the devil, witchcraft, diabolic rites, portraits, the cabala, the magical arts, and reformers. It is less comprehensive than Dr. Montague Summers' learned studies, but it merits attention in its own right.

Sir Hesketh Bell's book is a curious mixture of lores about witchcraft and fish, each distinct from the other. At first glance it might seem that the book concerns the specific lore of witchcraft pertaining to fishes, but this is not the case; it is simply that the author has a special knowledge of obeah men in the vicinity of Nassau on the one hand, and of fishes on the other; he has set down his knowledge in a series of little informal essays and reminiscences, and they are contained in this slight

little book. It is not major fare; it contains some interesting observations, and recounts some curious cases of witchcraft which have come to the author's attention; but it is definitely light-weight and, however entertaining, does not merit serious attention.

—AUGUST DERLETH

JOHN CAMPBELL'S STORIES

WHO GOES THERE?. by John W. Campbell, Jr. Shasta Publishers, Chicago. 230 pages, \$3.00.

The seven "tales of science-fiction" which go to make up this first collection by the editor of *Astounding Science-Fiction* will challenge the devotee principally because so many of the stories read like essays or lectures set down in the form of fiction. Of the seven stories—*Who Goes There?*, *Blindness*, *Frictional Losses*, *Dead Knowledge*, *Elimination*, *Twilight* and *Night*—only two merit serious attention, the title story and *Dead Knowledge*, but of these two *Who Goes There?* is a little masterpiece. The longest story in the book, this terror-fraught novelette about what a group of Antarctic explorers found in the ice is easily one of the best science-fiction stories of our time.

Perhaps that is because it is a story primarily of genuine human beings facing a horror from outside, and not, as in the case of the remaining stories, merely an exercise in science-jargon with characters who never emerge beyond their names. Were it not for this story, it would be easy to say that Mr. Campbell is not a writer of fiction at all in any sense of the word; yet this story is so much better done than anything else in fiction by Campbell that I know that it offers a distinct conundrum to the science-fiction student. *Who Goes There?* manages to create a fine, sustained suspense, as well as a memorable mood.

It is mood that is dominant in *Dead Knowledge*, and few readers are likely soon to forget the great cities of the dead described in that story. An element of mood is discernible in such stories as *Twilight* and *Night* also, but, by and large, these tales, together with the remaining trio, are disappointing after the title story in particular.

Mr. Campbell is far from being "the master story-teller concerned with the consequences of technology and the machine on

man and the human spirit" that his publishers would have us believe he is. Yet the hand of a master is clearly evident in the fine title story, and if the balance of the stories in this volume had come up to the first, then certainly this book would deserve to rank among the very best books in the field during the past ten years. Even as it is, no *aficionado* will want to miss *Who Goes There?*

Mr. Campbell's introduction is ingenuous. Quite possibly he really believes every word of it. The book has been attractively, nay, strikingly, jacketed by Hannes Bok.

—JOHN HALEY

"THE WORLD IS MY IDEA"

BEYOND THIS HORIZON, by Robert A. Heinlein. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pa. 242 pages, illustrated; \$3.00.

In this novel Robert A. Heinlein has done an outstanding job of presenting "adult" science-fiction. With a passing obeisance to Aldous Huxley, author Heinlein roughs in a picture of life in the twenty-third century, life genetically controlled in an economy of super-abundance.

The protagonist of the story is one Hamilton Felix, a brilliant but erratic inventor whose value to the State lies in his genetic potential. The major plot details how he is persuaded to father a child with the aid (psychological) of Genetics Moderator Mordan and the assistance (physical) of his cousin, Longcourt Phyllis. During the course of the tale he acts in foiling a fascist revolt and helps in a scientific investigation of metaphysical concepts. His child is enlisted in a study of telepathy and the mysteries of life-after-death. Here Heinlein seems to realize how large a bite he has taken, and wisely stops chewing.

There is much more to this book, however, than the plot outline would indicate. Avoiding the common pitfalls of gadget description and mathematical exposition which preoccupy so many writers in the genre, Mr. Heinlein has chosen instead to concentrate on the social philosophy of the future. Unfortunately, he cannot escape the subjectivity which permeates every Utopian concept since More.

Inevitably, the writer who deals in pseudo-prophecy must remould the world nearer to his heart's desire. One cannot escape the conviction that Heinlein's picture of life in the future is based largely on wishful thinking and an exposition of personal philosophy. Whatever the cause, potential anachronisms abound. In a civilization based on scientifically controlled factors, Heinlein's citizens are given to carrying deadly weapons and shooting down total strangers for slight breaches in elaborate ceremonial courtesies. The incongruity of this conduct—learned dignitaries behaving like movie gangsters—mars credibility, despite the author's rationalization.

Furthermore, in the midst of a society founded on highly organized patterns of social behavior, Heinlein's future men (bred for perfection and the elimination of undesirable traits) continue to guzzle beer, swill liquor, gamble wildly against rigged machines, lose their tempers instantly, and fall in love at first sight without rhyme or reason. A revival of football games also sweeps the future world off its feet. So much for psychological progress. Apparently, despite all the learned abracadabra of zygotes, genes, chromosones and gametes, Mr. Heinlein still subscribes to a rather naive theory—"you can't change human nature."

And his concept of human nature, his concept of desirable attributes, seems to include pugnacity, sensuality and sentimentality *in extremis*. A survey of anthropology and ethnology might help him to revise his perspective, for human nature is not a constant or even a clearly-demarcated concept, and human behavior can and does alter. Whole civilizations and cultures can exist and have existed without war or drug-addiction, and with every variant of patriarchal or matriarchal control. There is no more reason for supposing that the "Anglish" modes are either superior or better fitted to survive than for one to believe that such well-established folkways as human sacrifice, public execution, religious prostitution, group suicide and marriage by capture are enduring manifestations of human nature. These phenomena have existed all over the world throughout recorded history and have played as important a part in the lives of millions of people as any of the social customs Heinlein chooses as desirable.

His single defense—"the fighting spirit has been preserved because it is biologically useful" seems a complete rationalization. Since he has set up a world free from war, poverty or disease,

free in most respects from social or commercial competition, the biological usefulness of his citizens' shooting one another down in public lies open to question. It would seem much more logical in Mr. Heinlein's genetically-controlled world, to esteem sexual virility and promulgate promiscuity and polygamy in an effort to advance mutations. One has no recourse, therefore, but to suspect that Mr. Heinlein is unable to visualize many advantages in living in a world where fighting, gambling, and drinking are not glorified or looked upon as social assets.

Similarly, in presenting the courtship of his hero and heroine. Mr. Heinlein gives us the familiar big he-man and untamed little spitfire combination so beloved by movie fans and confession story readers everywhere. Tomboyish but bosomy heroine shows up in hero's apartment, provokes him; he grabs her, disarms her, slaps her face, and presto—it's *love*! In the same classic vein, his "weakling" secondary hero sees a mysterious girl at a party and immediately fall head over heels—then literally searches the wide world over to find her again and fall into her arms.

Such routine bits of business tend to mar the overall concept of the story, reducing grandeur to grandiosity. But perhaps it is too much to expect of anyone to completely carry off such an ambitious project; it is not easy for a man to play God and go Him one better by creating a world of utter perfection. Mr. Heinlein must be congratulated therefore on the basis of his accomplishments rather than criticized for his shortcomings. And his accomplishments, in the purely literary sense, are considerable. *Beyond This Horizon* is head and shoulders above the usual science-fiction novel, both in concept and execution. Here is a book that belongs on the shelf of the thinking reader.

—ROBERT BLOCH

A COSMIC NOVEL

THE WEB OF EASTER ISLAND, by Donald Wandrei. Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin. 191 pages, \$3.00.

This first novel by Donald Wandrei is imbued throughout with the same unique qualities of cosmic imagination that distinguished *The Red Brain*, *Earth Minus*, *Finality Unlimited*, and numerous other short tales by him. The mystery of the megalithic remains

of Stonehenge and Easter Islands has been woven into a narrative that involves ulterior dimensions and endlessly repeated cycles of time and super-time.

The novel begins with the mysterious and disasterous events that follow the finding of an anomalous green image by a child in a long-disused and ill-reputed graveyard at Isling, England. This image is the Keeper of the Seal, mentioned in an Asian manuscript written in a tongue far older than Sanskrit: "Out of crypts deeper than the clouds are high shall the Keeper of the Seal issue forth a summons to the titans. The Keeper of the Seal shall become even as the titans and take his place on Crtul Thr."

Drawn by a newspaper account of the strange events at Isling, Carter Graham, a museum curator, investigates the unused graveyard and becomes the temporary possessor of the Keeper of the Seal. Later, having fortunately lost the image, he descends with a companion into a vault of prodigious depth and extent beneath the graveyard, a vault designed as a sort of time-trap by the macrocosmic titans who had built it a million and five hundred thousand years ago for their own sinister but scientific purposes. Graham escapes from the trap by a narrow margin of time, but his companion suffers the same doom that had overtaken numberless others, both men and the ancestors of men.

In the meantime, a fugitive wife-murderer has become the involuntary and unwitting owner of the green image. He meets on shipboard a strangely beautiful woman, with hair half white, half black, who, it seems, has made a surreptitious disposal of her husband. Their meeting affords a highly piquant episode—a spice of mundanity amid elements of ultraspatial terror and super-human vastness.

The tale unravels a web far-spun in time and place, and mounts to a stupendous climax on Easter Island, where Graham goes to confront the returning titans from the macrocosmos. Its premises, events and implications are among the most staggering in imaginative literature. Wholly original in style and concept, it is a worthy congener of such Lovecraft masterpieces as *The Call of Cthulhu*, *The Colour out of Space*, and *The Shadow out of Time*.

—CLARK ASHTON SMITH

SHORT NOTICES

THE UNEXPECTED, edited by Bennett Cerf. Bantam, New York. 273 pages, \$.25. This new Cerf anthology is one of "stories that take you by surprise," and several of them are decidedly macabre. Among them are tales by John Collier, Lord Dunsany, Dorothy Sayers, Robert Bloch, A. E. Coppard, Carl Jacobi, O. Henry, Ambrose Bierce, Helen R. Hull, Saki, and John Russell. This is an excellent buy; no individual reader is likely to have all the stories, and the repeats are offset by the low price and the new pieces.

SINISTER BARRIER, by Eric Frank Russell. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pennsylvania. 253 pages, \$3.00. Lovers of sinister Menace novels will whoop with joy over this one. Beginning with the fascinating theory that human beings are "owned" by invisible beings of superior intelligence and know-how, and proceeding with liberal quotations of mysterious happenings from the works of Charles Fort to "prove" the theory, Mr. Russell soon takes his hero and puts him up against the Vitons, who have already slain many of the world's top scientists. Our hero triumphs, but only after there has been a lot of slaughter, aided by a war perpetrated by the "Asian Combine," and so on. More gore is splashed around in this book than in all the whodunits of the past two decades rolled into one, with the victims of World War II thrown in for good measure. Mr. Russell has revised this piece since its original appearance in *Unknown*, but for all that, it is written in large part as if it were a fugitive from the Tom Swift series. Mr. Russell's concept deserved better treatment. Yet, despite elements of the ridiculous, *Sinister Barrier* will be enjoyed as pure entertainment in the field of fantasy by many readers. The more discriminating might close their eyes to the adolescent whoop-de-do.

APE AND ESSENCE, by Aldous Huxley. Harper & Brothers, New York. 205 pages, \$2.50. Readers of *Brave New World* will know what to expect in Mr. Huxley's new novel, which is cut from the same cloth. In that earlier book he was concerned with a society bent on self-destruction; in *Ape and Essence* he depicts in the form of a scenario what has happened to the earth after World War III, when the

worship of Belial has come into being and the earth is ruled by churchmen who are eunuchs. Dr. Poole, captured by the post-World War III subnormals while he is on an expedition from New Zealand to rediscover America, is forced to join the ranks of the Belial-worshippers, but reverts to normalcy with the girl, Loola. The primary feature of the book is its satire, and the savage wit that is directed "as always against the smugness, the complacency, the indifference which strangle men in their efforts toward progress." For the devotee no-matter-what; for the average reader it is likely to prove somewhat dull, a donkey belabored too long and too often.

SHADOW OF FU MANCHU, by Sax Rohmer. Crime Club, Doubleday & Company, New York. 190 pages, \$2.00. The sinister Dr. Fu Manchu, some devotees of fantasy hold, properly belongs in the domain of the macabre. Actually, however, there are elements of fantasy in many mysteries which make no claim to being fantastic, and this new adventure of the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu, in which the wily old devil doctor is a member of the Council of Seven and actually the hero of the book in that he is fighting Communism with Nayland Smith, his one-time enemy, does have its share of fantastic concepts along orthodox lines—"advanced" television, unknown drugs, a zombie named M'goyna, and so on. The scene is Manhattan, the chase, as usual, is exciting, and all lovers of the old Chinaman who has been active for nigh onto forty years now will want this most recent account of Fu Manchu's doings. There is less interrupting romance in this one, and New York's Chinatown comes a close second to London's Limehouse. One almost expects a fog and the booming of Big Ben at any moment. Primarily, however, the chronicles of Fu Manchu, entertaining as they are, are not fantasy, and this most recent adventure, depicting Fu Manchu's attempt to keep a certain dread invention from falling into the hands of Soviet agents, is principally mystery-adventure fare, classified as "chase and adventure" by the publishers.

FROM UNKNOWN WORLDS, Edited by John W. Campbell, Jr. Street & Smith, \$.25. This newsstand publication of 130 crowded pages is a compilation of stories made

from the old *Unknown Worlds* magazine which had such a short existence lamentably not very many years ago. The stories and poems have been selected to present "an anthology of fantasy for grown-ups," but, says editor Campbell in his foreword, "a type of fantasy that is decidedly out standard, conventional, or stock stuff." As an editor, Mr. Campbell expresses the belief that "fantasy was intended for fun." There is manifestly some confusion of terminology, for the term "fantasy" includes far more than this, but, terminology regardless, this collection will be delightful for most devotees of the genre. Contained in this ample collection are the following stories: *The Enchanted Week End*, by John Mac Cormac; *Nothing in the Rules*, by L. Sprague de Camp; *The Compleat Werewolf*, by Anthony Boucher; *The Refugee*, by Jane Rice; *The Cloak*, by Robert Bloch; *Yesterday Was Monday*, by Theodore Sturgeon; *Trouble With Water*, by H. L. Gold; *Anything*, by Phillip St. John; *One Man's Harp*, by Babette Rosmond; *The Devil We Know*, by Henry Kuttner; *The Psychomorph*, by E. A. Grosser; *The Hexer*, by Howard Wandrei Guernsey; *The Summons*, by Don Evans; and *Jesus Shoes*, by Allan R. Bosworth; and these poems—*Lurani*, by Paul Dennis Lavond; *Black Cats*, by Cristel Hastings; *The Dawn of Reason*, by James H. Beard; and *Fiction*, by Gerald Clarke. To refer once again to the foreword: "It's perfectly true that the fantasy chiller has a place; we agree to that, and you'll find them with us, too. But not, please, the gloom and terror spread on with a trowel, driven in with a mallet, and staked out with an oak stave through its heart. Horror injected with a sharp and poisoned needle is just as effective as when applied with the blunt-instrument technique of the so-called Gothic Horror tale." With that few fans will quarrel, and neither will most editors. Cold grue, the whimsical, the supernatural, horror, terror, suspense—all these have a place under the label of "fantasy" and one's taste in these matters is determined by many factors beyond his conscious knowledge. Certainly no one can deny that Mr. Campbell, as editor of *Unknown Worlds*, presented to the readers of fantasy in all its forms some of the most notable tales in the genre to be published in recent years. The present collection tends to emphasize the

whimsical at the expense of the horrible. One may legitimately object to the deliberately flip note, but the objection must then be based upon the fact that a situation which might be potentially horrible is actually not so because it is presented in so whimsical a manner as to diminish any possible feeling of terror or horror which might arise. In short, the story boils down to one of fun, to a kind of comic tale in the field of fantasy, and demonstrates anew that the comic and the horrible seldom mix. With Mr. Campbell's premises few readers would quarrel; he offers this collection as "an anthology of the Light Fantastic, in which werewolves get the hotfoot, demons are haunted, and anything goes—provided it's fun." Those readers and collectors who are unfortunate enough not to own a run of *Unknown Worlds* should hie themselves to the nearest newsstand and add *From Unknown Worlds* to their shelves without delay.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ALL HALLOWS' EVE, by Charles Williams. Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York. 273 pages, \$2.75.

OUT OF THE SILENCE, by Patrick Mahony. Storm Publishers, New York. 180 pages, \$2.50.

VOYAGES TO THE MOON, by Marjorie Nicolson. Macmillan Company, New York. 297 pages, \$4.00.

ART AND THE UNCONSCIOUS, by Lionel Goitein. United Book Guild, New York. \$3.75.

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

Our First Year

With this issue we come to the end of the first year of *The Arkham Sampler*. We must confess that we are not much satisfied with the magazine thus far; we are hampered by limitations of space, by the increasing cost of production, by the drain on our time necessary to keep the issues coming. Our readers have been loyal enough; we would not question them; they have remained with us and even appeared to believe that the magazine has given them enough to warrant their reading each succeeding issue.

We are going on with *The Arkham Sampler* for at least one more year. We have to offer in our next four issues new poems by Clark Ashton Smith, Leah Bodine Drake, and others; new stories by John Beynon Harris, Clark Ashton Smith, H. Russell Wakefield, and others; the reprint of an early science-fiction novel *The Last American*, by J. A. Mitchell, a memoir of H. P. Lovecraft by E. Hoffmann Price, a further installment of Malcom Ferguson's *A Little Anthology*, and other pieces. For our fifth issue, that is, Volume II, Number 1, coming in January, 1949, we are presenting a special science-fiction number. This issue will contain new science-fiction stories by A. E. Van Vogt, Ray Bradbury, and Stephen Grendon; it will feature a long symposium—*A Basic Science-Fiction Library*, by P. Schuyler Miller, Forrest J. Ackerman, Sam Moskowitz, Dr. David H. Keller, Donald Wandrei, A. E. Van Vogt, Sam Merwin, Jr., Paul L. Payne, Henry Kuttner, and others; and there will be a cogent article, *The Case for Science-Fiction*, by Sam Moskowitz; as well as a satire by Peter Viereck, an editorial discussion of science-fiction by August Derleth, and other contributions.

Potential subscribers to Volume II of *The Arkham Sampler*, i.e., for 1949, should take note of the fact that subscriptions sent in up to January 1, 1949, may be entered at \$3.50 for the year of four issues; after January 1, the subscription price will revert to \$4.00.

Fantasy in "Comics"

Fantasy and the macabre have recently invaded the field of those little colored picture books miscalled "comics" in earnest.

We have on our desk the Fall 1948 issue, which is Number 1, of a "comic book" entitled *Adventures into the Unknown*, which features such horrendous picture-stories as *The Werewolf Stalks*, *The Living Ghost*, *Haunted House*, *True Ghosts of History*, *The Castle of Otranto*, *It Walked By Night*, *Strange Spirits*, and *The Cursed Pistol*. These are all "straight" macabre tales done in pictures; there is nothing comic about them in any sense of the word. Rumor has it that a well-known writer of weirds and science-fiction authored most of these stories—i. e., wrote the continuity for the pictures, but we shall leave it to rumor and not repeat his name here. To round out the first issue to perfection, Mr. Charles Atlas displays his hairless form on the inside of the back cover. Serious *aficionados* will not be interested, but those who lean to tales of gore, action, and screaming stories will enjoy this new addition to magazines dealing with the lore of the supernatural and allied fantasy.

Errant Publicity

In publicity releases in connection with his excellent little anthology, *The Unexpected*, our esteemed contemporary, Bennett Cerf, ebulliently allowed himself to be quoted, relating to his *Famous Ghost Stories*, as follows: "By some strange coincidence, two years after my collection was published, these same stories appeared as 'discoveries' in other anthologies." Perhaps Bennett Cerf, who is far better known as a collector of anecdotes, ought to be allowed to have his joke, but the record will bear some examination.

The release led off with, "The day is past when you can plagiarize stories from other anthologies and get away with it." Of course, that practice is not plagiarism, but the point to be made here is about *Famous Ghost Stories*, and the error of Mr. Cerf's "publicity". In the first place, the original collection was not edited by Mr. Cerf at all, but by Arthur B. Reeve, under the title of *Best Ghost Stories*. The contents of that first version of the Modern Library anthology were, apart from Reeve's introduction, *The Fascination of the Ghost Story*, *The Apparition of Mr. Veal*, by Daniel Defoe; *Canon Alberic's Scrap-Book*, by M. R. James; *The Haunted and the Haunters*, by Edward Bulwer-Lytton; *The Silent Woman*, by Leopold Kompert; *The Man Who Went Too Far*, by E. F. Benson; *The Woman's Ghost Story*, by Algernon Blackwood; *The Phantom 'Rickshaw*, by Rudyard Kipling; *The Rival Ghosts*, by Brander Matthews;

The Damned Thing, by Ambrose Bierce; *The Interval*, by Vincent O'Sullivan; *Dey Ain't No Ghosts*, by Ellis Parker Butler; and two unsigned pieces, *Banshees* and *Some Real American Ghosts*.

Mr. Cerf makes some considerable alterations in his selections, but retains five of Mr. Reeve's titles, the stories by Bulwer-Lytton, Bierce, Kipling, Matthews, and Benson. All these tales had been much anthologized even before publication of the Reeve version of the collection. To these tales Mr. Cerf added the following, apart from an introductory note and an article, *The Current Crop of Ghost Stories*, by himself: *The Willows*, by Algernon Blackwood; *The Monkey's Paw*, by W. W. Jacobs; *The Mezzotint*, by M. R. James; *The Open Window*, by Saki; *The Beckoning Fair One*, by Oliver Onions; *On the Brighton Road*, by Richard Middleton; *The Considerate Hosts*, by Thorp McClusky; *August Heat*, by W. F. Harvey; *The Return of Andrew Bentley*, by August Derleth and Mark Schorer; and *The Supper at Elsinore*, by Isak Dineen. Of these titles, those by Blackwood, Jacobs, James, Saki, Onions, and Harvey had appeared in not only one but several anthologies prior to publication of *Famous Ghost Stories*. The stories by McClusky and Derleth and Schorer had appeared in Phil Strong's *The Other Worlds*, and were subsequently reprinted in *25 Modern Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. Whether the Middleton and Dineen stories had appeared in anthologies previously we are not prepared to say without further research. But what we do want to know, returning to Mr. Cerf's vaunted "coincidence," is this: just which were the stories that appeared as "'discoveries' in other anthologies"? We like Bennett Cerf, but we think his publicity releases ought to stick closer to fact, and not stray quite so far into pure fancy.

Visitors at Arkham House

Arkham House recently enjoyed a visit from Dr. David H. Keller and his charming wife, Celia, and from Sam Moskowitz, the three whom paused on their way back from the Toronto Convention of science-fiction and fantasy fans. We found Dr. and Mrs. Keller delightful people; we had met Mr. Moskowitz before and found him no less enthusiastic and sincere than ever; and for our part, we believe they made their departure convinced that ogres do not inhabit Arkham House, slander and malice to

the contrary. We spent the better part of a day discussing the convention, science-fiction, fantasy, and the fans, talking about a book of the best of David H. Keller's fantasy and science-fiction which Arkham House hopes eventually to publish, about the late H. P. Lovecraft, whose distinct gentility appealed to Dr. Keller, himself a gentleman of the old school, even more than the effectiveness of the Lovecraft stories, and similar subjects. Though Lovecraft and Dr. Keller never met, it is certain that they would have liked and appreciated each other. Dr. Keller, long a practising psychiatrist, recently wrote an analysis of Lovecraft under the title, *The Shadow Over Lovecraft*, originally printed in A. Langley Searles' fine magazine, *The Fantasy Commentator*, and to be reprinted in a forthcoming Arkham House collection in 1949. After the Kellers had taken off, once again for Canada, Mr. Moskowitz discussed the pros and cons of science-fiction with us, and we enjoyed some mutual laughter at the knowledge that many of the fans, failing to understand the sincerity of our disagreements, pictured us as violent feudists constantly at each other's throats.

Opinion

We should have thought it unnecessary to point out that opinions expressed in our pages are not necessarily in agreement with those of the editor. But some of our readers and some publishers whose books are reviewed here have tended to think otherwise; so we take this opportunity to assure them that the opinions of contributors, particularly of book-reviewers, do not necessarily coincide with those of the editors. When a book is assigned for review, the reviewer's integrity is respected; if the editor disagrees with what he writes, it is still the reviewer's name which is signed to his review, no one else's.

Our Contributors

Lord Dunsany is the widely-known author of such delightful fantasies as *Tales of Three Hemispheres*, *A Dreamer's Tales*, *The Book of Wonder*, *Plays of God and Men*, *Travel Tales of Mr. Joseph Jorkens*, and many others. Arkham House has just published his most recent book, *The Fourth Book of Jorkens*. Lord Dunsany's story in this issue has never before been published in America in any form. . . . August Derleth's most recent book is *Sac Prairie People*, a book of short stories which has won high praise from such discerning critics as Maxwell Geismar and

John Cournos, has been recommended by the Book of the Month Club, and by Martha Foley as a distinctive collection. One Sunday afternoon last Summer while sitting on a hilltop near the home of Arkham House reading letters from H. P. Lovecraft, he conceived the fanciful meeting of the spirits of Lovecraft and Edgar Allen Poe on the streets both used to walk in lifetime, and the poem in this issue is the result. . . . From his shop, The Brookfield Bookshop, Sanbornville, New Hampshire, Malcolm Ferguson offers for sale excellent proof-impressions of several hundred items of black and white art by Aubrey Beardsley, many suitable for framing, all from a remarkably fine collection imported from England. Mr. Ferguson has contributed to *Weird Tales* and other magazines. . . . Clark Ashton Smith is putting the finishing touches to a new story he is writing for *The Arkham Sampler*, and he is still at work on the preparation of his *Selected Poems* for Arkham House. . . . Peter Viereck is a young Massachusetts writer who has contributed to *The Saturday Review of Literature*, *New Directions X*, *Cronos*, and many other magazines. His first collection of poems, *Terror and Decorum*, was published last month by Charles Scribner's Sons. . . . *Nut Bush Farm* is quite possibly the best of the tales in Mrs. J. H. Riddell's collection, *Weird Stories*, published well before the turn of the century in Victorian England. Writing in *Willie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others*, S. M. Ellis says of her book that it contains "some of the best ghost tales ever written," and, more recently, Herbert Van Thal, who brought out a new edition of this splendid little collection in London, 1946, praises the "strict economy" of her work, and suggests that connoisseurs of the ghost story will find in her book "tales that should come up to their highest expectations." . . . Leah Bodine Drake is an Indiana-born poet whose verse ranks high in the annals of fantasy. A contributor to *Weird Tales*, *Voices*, and many other magazines, she is currently preparing a collection of her fine fantastic poems for book publication. . . . The present instalment of *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* concludes our presentation of H. P. Lovecraft's novel of fantasy and terror. . . . Robert Bloch has just completed a second collection of his powerful macabre short stories, under the tentative title of *Pleasant Dreams*, for publication by Arkham House.

Jottings

We believe that readers of *The Arkham Sampler* will share our pleasure in the fact that Ray Bradbury, author of *Dark Carnival*, has been awarded the \$100.00 third prize for his story, *Powerhouse*, among this year's O. Henry Memorial Award Stories. The story is reprinted in the *Prize Stories of 1948*, edited by Herschel Brickell, and published by Doubleday & Company at \$3.00. This is not Mr. Bradbury's first appearance in the best short story annuals, and it will not be his last.

* * * *

With publication of Lord Dunsany's *The Fourth Book of Jorkens* last month, and of *Genius Loci and Other Tales*, by Clark Ashton Smith, this month, with only Seabury Quinn's *Roads* and August Derleth's *Not Long for This World* coming up before year's end, Arkham House is preparing 1949 catalogs. The 1949 catalogs will be in two separate issues; one will announce all forthcoming books known to date, though many may not be published for three years or more to come; the other will be a complete and comprehensive list of all books in stock with Arkham House, Mycroft & Moran, and Stanton & Lee. The former will go to all our regular patrons, but the latter will not be sent to them. Both catalogs will go to new patrons, in answer to their requests. All material in the latter will already have been noted in previous Arkham House catalogs, and will thus already be in the possession of our regular patrons.

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Readers of this magazine will be interested in *The Best American Short Stories: 1948*, edited by Martha Foley, and published by Houghton, Mifflin Company of Boston, at \$3.75. We want to direct their attention particularly to Miss Foley's Foreword to this year's collection, which takes official cognizance of the rise of fantasy in today's magazines.

"Not for one hundred years," she writes, "not since the writing of Edgar Allan Poe, has the short story in America displayed the tendencies it has shown during the past year. *The Fall of the House of Usher* or *The Cask of Amontillado*, if published for the first time today, could be considered, save for some of their antiquated wording, as contemporary as any stories which have appeared in literary or popular magazines in recent months.

"The overwhelming tension, the terror, the specter of unde-

finer guilt which permeated Poe's work are the most obvious attributes of today's short story writing. They are attributes present even in those stories which do not actually include ghosts, vampires, mysterious voices, haunted mirrors, little people in bewitched Easter eggs, and similar weird manifestations. In modern atom-bomb-inventing, airplane-traveling, electrically powered United States of America the newest widespread literary development is, of all things, a re-emergence of the old-fashioned ghost story!

"This is a startling change from the realistic kind of writing to which we have been accustomed for many years. In England, of course, ghost stories have been written and published continuously for centuries. But we in America turned away from them almost completely, preferring in our reading the natural to the supernatural. There had been an occasional writer in this country, such as H. P. Lovecraft, who specialized in the uncanny, two or three pulp magazines which published such material, and a publishing firm like Arkham House which concentrates on the more literary type of this kind of writing. But they did not prepare us for its incredibly sudden, widespread acceptance."

Thus Miss Foley introduces her most recent collection, going on to further comments in a similar vein. The book itself is the customary excellent collection containing stories by more than a score of authors, including Ray Bradbury, John Cheever, Martha Gellhorn, E. B. White, Victoria Lincoln, Robert Lowry, Wallace Stegner, and Eudora Welty, among others. We recommend this volume to all lovers of good stories, regardless of genre.



Arkham House

Announces

publication in October of
GENIUS LOCI AND OTHER TALES
by CLARK ASHTON SMITH \$3.00

in November of: **ROADS**
by SEABURY QUINN \$2.00

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in the next issue of
THE ARKHAM SAMPLER
new stories by Ray Bradbury, A. E. Van Vogt,
John Beynon Harris, and Stephen Grendon
THE CASE FOR SCIENCE-FICTION
by SAM MOSKOWITZ

A BASIC SCIENCE-FICTION LIBRARY
A Symposium by A. Langley Searles,
Forrest J. Ackerman, Henry Kuttner, Sam
Merwin, Jr., A. E. Van Vogt, Paul L. Payne,
Donald Wandrei, and others





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